

2013 Golden Jubilee edition

BIHAR YOGA®

The Golden Collection 3

A collection of original publications
from the Bihar Yoga Tradition



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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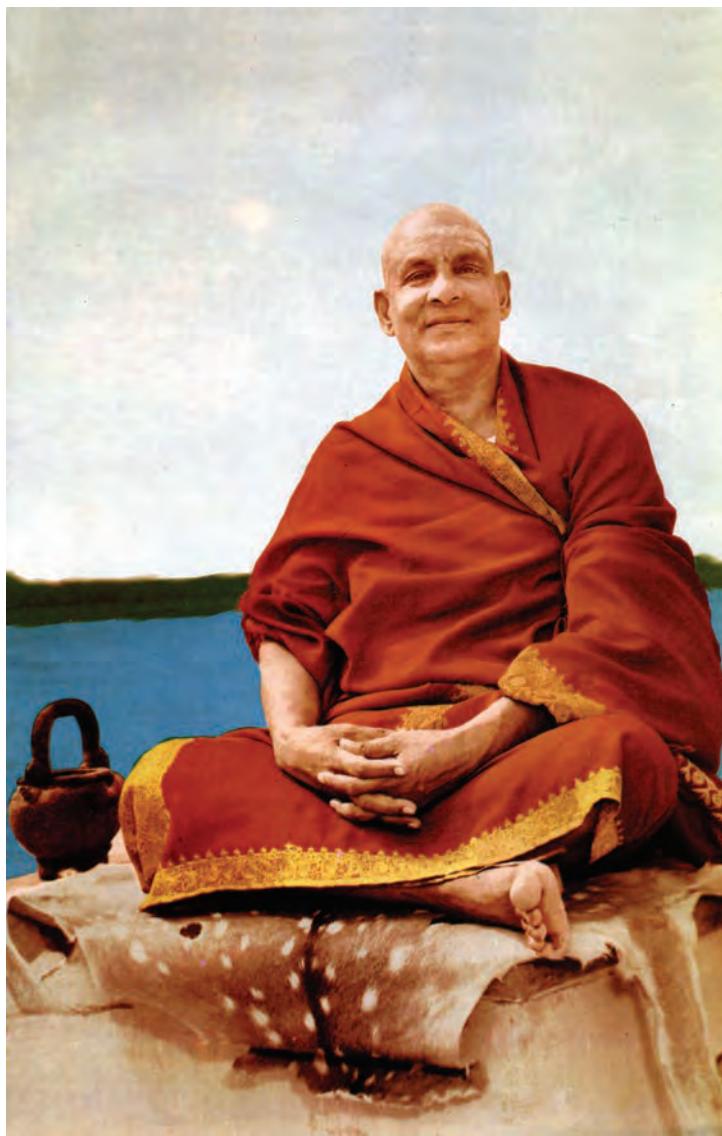
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DEDICATED TO SWAMI SIVANANDA
– *the light and life of our mission*

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Preface

In the early 1970s and 1980s, the devotees of Sri Swami Satyananda carefully printed and published his lectures, discourses and class transcripts in small booklets, preserving and disseminating these important teachings. The booklets were their first contribution to their guru's mission of 'spreading yoga from door to door and shore to shore'. For many years these gems from the past have been out of print and unavailable. On the occasion of the Bihar School of Yoga's Golden Jubilee 2013 celebrations, these lost works have been compiled into a set of volumes aptly named *The Golden Collection*, so that once again the classic words which launched a yoga movement can inspire spiritual aspirants around the world.

In reproducing the booklets the original language has been kept intact, conveying the flavour of the time. The language shows the care that Sri Swami Satyananda took to make his teachings clear to his audience, never compromising clarity for fashion or style. His ability to present and adjust any topic to any audience is proof of the versatility which enabled him to convey his deep understanding of the potential of yoga to meet the needs of all.

A pioneer of his time, Sri Swami Satyananda gave a new dimension to the practice of asana, stating clearly that it can take the practitioner far beyond physical wellbeing. He often guided his disciples through letters brimming with snippets

of wisdom, which are as valuable and pertinent today as they were almost fifty years ago. *The Golden Collection* also includes a systematic introduction to the various meditation practices expounded by Sri Swami Satyananda. No step is missed and no precaution left out, allowing the aspirant to safely travel the journey of yoga and spiritual life. For each practice, whether antar mouna, ajapa japa or nada yoga, precision and clarity are the key. The branches of yoga are concisely elucidated, making them relevant to the daily life of each yoga aspirant.

Much that is taken for granted today was unknown or misunderstood at that time: it is the great achievement of Sri Swami Satyananda to have brought yoga to the general public and mainstream of society, truly making yoga a household word the world over.

The extraordinary quality of his being and spiritual attainments was recognized early in his life. While living in Rishikesh in the ashram of his guru, Swami Sivananda Saraswati, the young swami received glowing appreciation and admiration from guru-bhais, visitors and guests. To this day, tributes continue to express love and a sense of profound gratitude from all who have been touched by this modern day saint and his teachings. Sri Swami Satyananda, however, remained a disciple throughout his life and fulfilled his guru's mandate by making it his life's mission.

The Golden Collection is a true testimony to the wealth and depth of yoga and to its master exponent, Sri Swami Satyananda. In his early teachings he set the tone, purpose and aim of his mission. The reader is able to discover and connect with the roots of Satyananda Yoga, whilst appreciating its evolving contemporary nature, a trademark of this tradition.

Indeed, Sri Swamiji's prophecy, "yoga is the culture of tomorrow", has come true. His tomorrow is our today.



Mechanics of Meditation

Practices for Peace

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

The first 1965 edition of *Mechanics of Meditation* met with such success that a second edition was released in 1973, making available, to a still wider public, these highly sought-after practices for inner growth and peace.

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Introduction

What is meditation? is a question in the minds of limitless people all around the world. Meditation is an intellectual and practical quest which is being examined through the medium of classical texts within the ancient literature of the yogis, Hindus, Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Zen Buddhists and a host of many other religious cultures and spiritual sciences. Now meditation is being practised in every country of the world by people old and young, male and female, renunciates and householders, married and unmarried, sick and healthy, pious and atheistic, celibate and non-celibate alike.

Brought about by the necessity of the modern age, meditation has become a household word. For the religious it is a means to communicate with the Lord; for the philosophical meditation is the means to realize the unity of that essence of life, the soul, with the universe; for the agnostic meditation is a means to experience the reality beyond the scope of the thinking faculty of mind. The psychiatrist uses meditation therapy for the cure of neuroses, nervous tensions and many mental disorders. Many people practise meditation with a view to attaining *siddhis*, or psychic powers. Now it is universally accepted that meditation is a practice which brings about peace and harmony within the individual.

According to the science of yoga, meditation is a practice and a revelation of the science of the human body, the

various personalities which go to the very depth of the mind, and the science of the soul. How to accomplish such lofty aims is the subject matter of this book. The overwhelming interest in meditation has now reached the laboratories of famous universities and research institutions in America, England and France. Scientists and research scholars are now probing into the reactions of the human mechanism brought about by meditation. These experiments are being conducted on the most exact bases so that even the most sceptical critic of the experiment results could not conclude that the results were false. This topic of meditation, which has for thousands of years connoted mysticism, blind faith and belief without knowledge, is now being probed with modern electronic devices, which graphically record results and remove the possibility of human error or individual opinion. Nowadays it is well known that meditation has specific effects on the physiological and mental make up of man. The findings of these electronic probes have proved the great yogis, seers and saints of the past correct.

In one experiment in California, USA, the technique of japa meditation was put under the electronic eye of the electro-encephalograph, commonly known as EEG. This instrument measures the state of mind or level of consciousness. It involves placing small metal contacts at various places on the skull which connect the brain to the EEG through wires. The energy level in the brain is then automatically recorded on a graph in the form of waves. The state of mind is known by the brainwave velocity, which is measured in the unit cycles per second.

The experimental subjects were a random selection of people who had been practising japa meditation for times varying from three months to many years.

The results showed that within a few minutes of the commencement of practice, every person showed a new characteristic wave in the brain, which is known as alpha wave (α -wave). This α -wave is about one third of the normal conscious state brainwave velocity. The researchers

concluded that α -wave is the characteristic of a relaxed and tranquil mind. Moreover, this degree of tranquillity cannot be achieved by other means such as sleep or hypnosis.

These results agreed with other experiments conducted on yogis in India who, at the beginning of their meditation, emitted characteristic conscious state wave formation, after a short time α -waves and after this an even slower wave called theta-waves. This shows that by meditation a state of relaxation is reached, which is increasingly tranquil, according to the length of the sitting and the experience of the practitioner.

It was found that when the brain emitted α -waves some physiological changes in the body were also brought about. These had the characteristic of tranquillity, serenity and perfect relaxed functioning. The heartbeat slowed, and blood pressure, oxygen metabolism and electrical resistance of the skin decreased. Blood lactate level decreased and the breathing rate slowed down. When the researchers examined each of these changes one by one, they came to an interesting conclusion.

First, the high heartbeat rate is the sign of an excited and mentally uncontrolled state. When the effort of doing the simple necessary tasks of life becomes a strenuous burden, the heartbeat rate is high. The scientists stated that meditation is the cure for this.

Second, high blood pressure is also the work of a worried mind, excited and anxious about the future prospects of career, business, livelihood, or the possible failure or success in life. The scientists stated that meditation is the cure for this.

Third, the oxygen metabolism is a measure of the oxygen requirement of the body cells. By practising meditation, not only the breathing rate decreased (this is normal for any relaxed or sleeping state), but also the actual requirement of the body cells for oxidation of nutrients decreased. This indicated the actual chemical reactions within the body slow down, the body requires less energy to maintain vitality and is, therefore, a more efficient mechanism.

Fourth, a high lactate level of the blood and a high electrical resistance of the skin is the indication of a person who is in the throes of neuroses. When the mind is being continually battered by a problem which appears so vast, complex and devastating that the person tends to break down in fits of mental agony and nervous depression, and which completely negates the hopeful side of life, scientists stated that meditation is the cure for this.

Fifth, a high breathing rate is an indication of mental tension, which also manifests in the body as physical tension, giving rise to a host of digestive and respiratory complaints. The scientists stated that meditation is the cure for this.

According to medical opinion, the cause of all modern diseases is related to the inherent capacity of man to combat situations dangerous to life and emergencies. In ancient times, when man had to hunt for his food and forage in the undergrowth for wild fruits and berries, his animal instincts were highly attuned to the possibility of attack from uncivilized tribes or wild animals. He always had to be aware of the conditions of the land, such as fire, famine, drought and flood, and his survival depended on the primitive instinct and intellectual ability to combat such threats.

In this modern, highly civilized society such threats are an anachronism. The combative mechanism, however, still lives within and reacts to the apparent emergencies of today, such as financial crises and family disturbances. It is this continuous functioning of the primitive combative mechanism to the limitless apparent threats, buffeting our modern society, which produces a host of psychiatric and physiological illnesses.

Meditation is the only technique by which man can negate these destructive reactions which are ruining the healthy lives of people in every metropolis and developed society.

Relaxation, most people think, means sleep or rest, lying down, reading a book, or going to the cinema. However, relaxation is actually none of these things. Every man has a certain amount of tension within his body and mind.

Actually there are, according to the psychologists, three types of tensions in man. They are physical, mental and emotional. The only way to completely relax and be free from tensions is to disconnect the mind and senses from the environment, and this occurs in the process of meditation. When man relaxes or sleeps, his mind is still entangled with the world, and it is full of disturbing thoughts from which he is constantly trying to escape by paying attention to enjoyments. Many people completely hide from themselves by taking sleeping pills, tranquilizers or by excessive drinking. The relaxation brought about by such procedures is only temporary and is due to the fact that drugs and outer activities cut off the inner awareness.

This awareness is an essential part of man, which differentiates him from the rest of the living species. Man can think and know that he is thinking; man can walk and know that he is walking; and he can talk and know that he is talking. Animals also have the faculties of thinking, walking and communicating, but animals do not have this knowing faculty, which is the awareness.

Meditation is a continual process of awareness. In the preliminary practices the awareness is focussed on a mantra, an outer object like the candle flame, on the breath, or on the whole physical body. This process of awareness on one particular object has the effect of probing deep into the mind and, through the channel of awareness, the vast stock of impressions in the mind flow up and out. It is through the exhaustions of these impressions that the mind becomes purified and tension-free.

Meditation is also a process of relaxation but with awareness. The body is in a certain fixed position, but its muscles are completely relaxed and, through the practice of mantra awareness, or other object awareness, the mind becomes relaxed and aware of the practice. As the relaxation continues to a greater and greater degree, along with the practice of meditation, the bands of tension, which hold down the vast subliminal stock of impressions, are unfettered.

Thus, the complexes, desires, dirty and fine impressions are released.

These impressions, which are locked into the unconscious and subconscious mind, are the root cause of man's physical and mental illnesses. The root cause of many disturbances is due to man's inability to act freely according to the instructions, desires and ideas in his mind. By virtue of man's social and religious conditioning, by virtue of the strict code of ethical and moral conduct, his mind is continually in tension due to what he wants, but cannot do, what he thinks, but does not like to think.

During the practices of meditation the exhaustion of these high tensions, desires and complexes occurs first. This exhaustion takes place in the form of experiences. With the mind cut off from the outer experiences and in a relaxed and aware condition it is free to experience the inner impressions. This is the path to purity, more aptly termed शुद्ध, *shuddha*.

The term *shuddha* does not imply ethical and moral purity, but freedom from tension, inhibition, ideas which one does not like, complexes, anxiety and guilt. Such a pure mind will always be cheerful. Under the most difficult and arduous circumstances, under constant stress and strain the mind will always work without error; thinking will be clear and powerful, words will be forceful, meditation will be deep and refreshing, and sleep will come whenever time permits. The classical definition of the yoga of meditation is from Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* (1:2):

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः

Yogashchittavritti nirodhah

Yoga chitta vritti nirodhah can be translated as 'yoga is the control of the modifications of consciousness'. The 'modifications of consciousness' entails the process of recognition of experiences, as against pure experiential awareness without relation to past experiences.

By concentration on a particular inner object the outer experience is diminished until the mind is completely withdrawn. At this point the body can be touched, but one does not feel it; burning incense can be placed under the nose, but one does not smell it; verbal sounds, musical sounds, or noises can be made, but one does not hear them; the eyes can be open, but one does not see anything outside. This state is called *pratyahara*, or sense withdrawal.

It is in order to reach the stage of *pratyahara* that we perform so many practices, such as *asana*, *pranayama*, *mudra*, *bandha*, *ajapa japa* and other branches of yoga, such as *bhakti yoga* and *karma yoga*. To achieve *pratyahara* we must diminish the outer awareness to a point of no dimension. However, once *pratyahara* is reached the inner awareness begins to expand until the mind with all its faculties for thinking, remembering, dreaming can be witnessed with an ever expanding, ever awakening awareness.

As more and more impressions are exhausted, the mind develops concentration, or fewer distractions are evident to it. This concentration, in the beginning, only lasts for a few seconds on one particular object, and only after some time does it increase to about ten seconds. It is at this stage that the meditating aspirant reaches the classical second stage of meditation termed *dharana*, or concentration. At the point of *dharana* mental and physical relaxation is complete and only deep rooted emotional tensions remain. By regular and consistent practice the aspirant exhausts more and more impressions, which are the obstacles to pure one-pointed concentration. The experiences become deeper and deeper and the point of *dhyana*, one-pointed concentration for a great length of time, is reached. The important point to note is that it is not the faculty of one-pointed concentration that is improved. This faculty of *dhyana* is a faculty inherent in us all. It is the distractions that have to be removed, and it is on this point that many aspirants are misguided. When, during meditation, through their minds' eye, they only witness distractions, they become

very perturbed and disheartened in their efforts. They do not realize that the process of exhaustion of distractions entails witnessing and experiencing as they pass up from the memory store.

This is the essence of the path of dhyana. First, the diminution of outer awareness to a point, then the exhaustion of inner awareness until the awareness with the total power of the mind is focussed on one inner point, and when this is continued for some time with absolute perfection, the goal of yoga is reached, which is samadhi. This samadhi marks the end of the chain of expression of *samskaras*, impressions, and the experience of the highest form of awareness and the cosmic consciousness. At this level the aspirant has transcended space and time, mind and body, he is limitless without beginning or end, and being fully immersed in the ocean of cosmic consciousness he realizes the three attributes *sat, chit, ananda* – reality, awareness and bliss.

This book, *Mechanics of Meditation*, is a complete practical treatment of the different types of meditation and is thus, not only for informative armchair reading, but serves as a practical guide to those who wish to tread the path of meditation.



Japa Yoga

You must have realized that meditation is a science, but there are many who cannot practise meditation. Even if some can, they do not get proper guidance from a guru. Such spiritual aspirants often complain of distractions in meditation.

In yoga, therefore, they have assigned greater importance to japa yoga. Japa yoga is a method of spiritual communion through the repetition of mantra. By continued repetition you create certain vibrations in your system. The recitation of the mantra purifies the physical organism and fills the mind with spiritual vitality. The term *mantra* literally means something, the reflection of which frees you from tensions. Yes, japa frees one from a host of mental vagaries and atrocities. According to realized saints, the mantra gives perfect knowledge of God and is the best medium for communion with God.

I shall now discuss the processes of japa yoga. Let me request you to proceed with a conviction, that in japa yoga the mantra which is recited is very powerful and that it confers siddhis. This fact has been amply demonstrated. It is within common experience that various fevers are removed by certain mantras meant for the purpose. Curing snake bite is not an unusual sight. Hypertensions, hysteria and blood pressure are also cured. It evidently goes to show, that there is a divine power latent in each mantra, which is released through faith and willpower. Our hypothesis is that the real

power is in the mantra itself. Just as the explosive power latent in a cartridge remains unreleased unless put through a rifle, likewise the divine power in any mantra remains unreleased unless approached through faith and willpower. In addition to this, it is necessary to aim the mantra with one-pointedness. When the mantra is awakened and becomes potent its invisible power comes into operation.

According to the science of occultism, in every mantra there are invisible powers hidden beyond the power to see. If anyone argues that a mantra is simply an arrangement of the syllables, nobody should believe him, because this view is scientifically untenable. Theosophists like Leadbeater, Annie Besant and Madam Blavatsky have clearly stated in their writings, that a mantra is totally different from a mere alphabetical congregation. If you come across the book *Garland of Letters* by Sir John Woodroffe you will realize that a mantra, or every occult syllable, has a secret power and meaning. *Om Namah Shivaya* is a mantra, which literally means 'I pay homage to Lord Shiva'. But if you analyze it in the light of esoteric science and occultism, you will know that every syllable of *Om Namah Shivaya* has a definite and different range and frequency of vibrations.

If you study the science of music, you will understand what I mean. The sound *na* has a definite length, frequency, depth and range. The sound *ma* will differ in length, frequency, depth and range. Their circuit, vibrations, velocity and frequency will be different. Therefore, in a mantra each syllable has a different form and meaning. In the Mrityunjaya mantra you say, "I pray to the three-eyed Shiva, who is the giver of strength; may He liberate me from the pangs of death", but in fact, if you are to analyze the mantra according to the rules of occultism, you will find each of the syllables has its own form and power. All mantras, whether intelligible or not, were uttered by saints after full realization. Thus, the supramental expressions came to be known as mantras. Mantras composed by grammarians are not mantras, but a grouping of letters. Unless one sees in

realization, one cannot formulate a mantra. So, mantra is a revealed product, not simply an arrangement of syllables.

You must have read in the Bible about the 'word of God'. Everyone who can reach the roof of the head is given a *shabda*, word. That *shabda* is called the mantra. Over thousands of years innumerable yogis have realized and received the divine sound or mantra, which they have, in succession, given to their disciples. If you want evidence or testimony, you will find it in all the holy scriptures of the world, that the word was always revealed.

In olden days, a Shiva bhakta initiated his disciples only into the Shiva mantra. A shaiva never initiated anyone into the Vishnu mantra. It was not because he was narrow-minded, but because he had not received that mantra himself. Today we are forced to initiate into a mantra which we have not heard in samadhi. Normally, I should initiate you in the mantra which I have myself practised and realized as a reality.

Once the mantra manifests, its realization can be had in the form of mantra siddhi and by realizing the presiding deity of that mantra. In *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya* the presiding deity is Sri Krishna. Shiva is the presiding deity of *Om Namah Shivaya*.

In all tribes they have mantras and their respective deities. The practitioner either gets mantra siddhi, or realizes the presiding deity of the mantra. If you practise the mantra *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya* according to the rules prescribed in the scriptures, you will either have direct realization of Sri Krishna, or acquire mantra siddhi. These are the two results of any mantra.

All mantras belong to two categories, commonly known as sakama and nishkama. When repeated with no self-interest it is *nishkama japa*. This forms a part of shuddha bhakti. *Sakama japa* is repetition of a mantra to achieve a particular end in view, for instance to win a lawsuit or to ward off an obstinate illness.

There are also tantric mantras. This is a different science altogether. According to tantra shastra, the mantra shakti

is awakened by undergoing various hardships and similar other disciplines. The very same shakti is released towards one's enemy. We find sometimes that, without any ostensible reason, stones and the like fall into a house which is properly closed. These are the effects of mantra shakti awakened through tantric processes.

There are two paths for tantric procession of mantras. One is the perverted way, in which the practitioner drinks wine, eats meat and fish and performs coitus as items of sadhana. Siddhis accruing from such sadhana are never used for noble ends.

Those who do japa of a sakama mantra for curing a sick person should do the mantra sadhana according to the rules laid down in the scriptures. There are many rules and regulations regarding the type of mala, the system of doing japa and purificatory rites.

If you want to do nishkama japa for spiritual upliftment alone, there is no rule as such. In such a case, you can practise japa either before or after bath, and at any place and time. There is no regulation of direction, time, place and process.

Suppose someone is ill and you are worried, and you have faith that by the repetition of the Mrityunjaya mantra you will be curing him. You can do the japa yourself, but you must finish the specified number of japa every day and not do it irregularly.

There is the Gayatri mantra, which is very powerful. Apart from its spiritual merits, it is a mantra of great potency. Swami Madhusudan performed purascharana of this mantra. There is a fear lurking in the minds of some people whether the japa might not have an adverse effect. This fear is justified if the japa is of sakama kind, but if you do the japa with nishkama bhava do not be afraid at all.

Then again, every mantra has two-fold usefulness. When it becomes the ishta mantra, then one has to do a certain number of malas daily, but when we repeat it either daily or occasionally, it forms a part of our prayer. Sometimes we say prayers with a particular end in view. But that is not a

regular affair. Today I may do Devi mantra and after some time I may give it up, but it is not so with the ishta mantra, which one receives through a guru, in dhyana, or in dream. It must be repeated every day. However, one can repeat other mantras as well. Now, the question is over whether I should chant so many mantras if the guru has initiated me in *Om Namah Shivaya*, and whether I should do Mrityunjaya mantra because I need it.

There are three main kinds of malas, such as sphatik, rudraksha and tulasi. Rudraksha is stronger than the rest. There is a definite way of holding the mala while doing japa. We use only three fingers, the thumb, the third and the fourth, and totally avoid the second and fifth. This is the first rule. The second rule is that we do not rotate it backward, we rotate it forward.

According to the third rule of japa yoga, we must not cross the sumeru. This is a very good rule since it avoids chances of absent-mindedness, mechanical rotation and the like. The most important point is constant observation and bead-to-bead awareness of mantra and second-to-second process of japa.

You can meditate on the form of the mantra, the sound vibrations of the mantra, the guardian deity of the mantra, or else you can be aware that you are meditating. When you sit for meditation, do it with as well as without japa. You must be aware of the ishta devata, either with open or closed eyes, or you can do trataka at the time of japa without a flicker of your eyelids. What should you practise first, japa or meditation? The answer is first do the japa and then practise meditation.

There are four stages in the process of practising japa. The first is verbal, that is loudly chanting the mantra. The second is repetition in whispers. This is more powerful than the first one. The second system is not for the beginners. If they take to it, they will find the mind wandering. The third is the mental japa, in which you have to meditate through the mental vibrations of the mantra and feel the mantra

mentally. This third system of repetition of japa is definitely more powerful than the first and second, but it is not for beginners. It is for those who have advanced in the practice of japa. The fourth is the ajapa. Though each is superior to the other, aspirants should practise japa in all its four stages progressively.

The practice of japa should either be done in padmasana, siddhasana or sukhasana. One should sit comfortably in any of these postures at least for an hour. Before sitting for japa it is necessary to say a few prayers and sing kirtans, otherwise the tension due to physical or mental strain will materialize during the japa in the form of visions.

When you tell beads, you should keep the awareness alert and mindful. Concentration is not suspension of mind, nor even one-pointedness of mind or total attention, but it implies awareness. During japa the hypnotized consciousness and the mechanical repetition are checked. The mind is very cunning. It knows many tricks. If you go to an expert for analysis, you will find your conscious mind thinking of hell whereas the subconscious mind is thinking of heaven; the conscious mind is thinking of purity, the subconscious is thinking of impurity. In order to have a grip over all the dimensions of consciousness, telling the beads will be very helpful if its traditional methods are not ignored.

Now we come to anushthana. *Anushthana* stands to denote a methodical process by which the deity of the mantra is awakened and mantra siddhi attained. Anushthana is done with twofold purposes. Some do it for the achievement of a particular selfish aim, others do it for self-purification, enlightenment and spiritual progress. Anushthana when done with nishkama bhava is called purascharana, in which you undertake to repeat as many lakhs of japa equal to the total syllables of your mantra. But in the case of very big mantras Khand Purascharana is prescribed. You should resolve to do twenty thousand (or whatever you can) japa every day. You have to complete it definitely at a particular time every day. You should not underdo or overdo it.

There must be regularity, and no fluctuation. Purascharana normally takes a month. It is better to take milk, fruits, boiled vegetables and sattwic diet.

Those who want to do anushthana with a particular aim should either do it under the strict rules of the scriptures, or get it done. Some people may well ask whether it is right and effective to get the japa done by pandits. He who does japa releases a certain force. It may either be in the form of thought vibrations, or in the form of energy principle, either electronic or vibratory. It is, however, a fact that energy is released from the person who practises japa.

There are many tantrics. They are far from yoga and self-restraint, far away from everything that is good, virtuous and pure. When they practise certain mantras they even produce harm. So, whosoever practises japa according to the rules prescribed by occultism, produces and releases an energy according to his intention.

Rudraksha mala is strong and durable. It has an occult significance as well. Sphatik mala is equally good for those who repeat Devi mantra. Tulsi mala is available everywhere. It is a very sensitive type of mala. One should handle it with purity. Much occult significance and mysteries surround the tulsi plant and tulsi mala. Much importance is attached to tulsi by scientists. Rudraksha means the eye of Shiva, the eye of intuition, or the inner eye, the pineal gland. It is possible that there is some relation between rudraksha and the inner eye. Possibly, it may have some occult affect over the ajna chakra, the mystic eye. It is a subject of study, research and experiment.



Manasic Japa: Its Efficacy in Life

Mental japa is nothing but introspection; it is *asmita* and not concentration. *Vaikhari* means audible sound, *madhyama* means mental. It is not merely a sound but an energy. This is *para anahad*, or heavenly sound. After a good deal of practice japa becomes mechanical. The method is meditation, sublimation and annihilation. Sublimation means we change the form. One channels one's energy and emotions towards God and becomes a *bhakta*. Thinking too much is not *dhyana yoga*.

You may do japa with *sakama bhava*. You must know the power latent in every mantra. Those who suffer from mental retardation and want to brighten their intellect, for them Gayatri japa is best. It was held in the past that only Brahmins could recite it, not even ladies, but let me tell you, that if you do not want to suffer from the dire disease, mental retardation, practise Gayatri japa every day. It is the oldest of all mantras. You find it in ancient books. This must be done at the time of sunrise with light clothes. You can also do it while breathing five times inside and two times outside in one full round of pranayama. The times for doing this japa are at dawn, at dusk and at noon, three times a day. See how Muslims do their namaz in the train or office. It seems to be dramatic, but they do it. Close your eyes in the office, let others think that you are sleeping. It will not take you more than ten minutes, morning, noon and evening.

There are many Gayatris. Brahma Gayatri has got its parallel in every religion. There is also Surya Gayatri. It is good for skin diseases, allergic dermatitis, leucodermal patches. Then there is Rudra Gayatri. Then also Vishnu Gayatri. You invoke the Gods through these mantras. They are objective experiences. They are not in us. Leading theosophists have carried out research in this field. To attract youngsters we play cheap songs and have folk dances. This is the mantra to attract them. The mantra serves the purpose of attracting occult powers, the guardian deities. All this is explained in the *Mahanarayana Upanishad*.

There is one more mantra which is very powerful. It is the thirty-two names of Durga. It has cured and solved many difficult problems which even perplexed me. It is a fact and we have come to know through results. The beginners will take five minutes to do this japa. Later on, with practice, it takes three to four minutes. It is never done either mentally or in whispers. You have to chant it loudly and pronounce it. This is a very powerful mantra. You can write it in any local language and read it.

Then there is the Mrityunjaya mantra. One mala takes fifteen minutes. You can do it mentally. Except the Devi path, all japa can be done mentally, or verbally, or by whispering, as convenient. *Devi Atharva Sheersham* is the only thing which is to be written and not to be repeated, but it is written only when there is Satavisha Nakshatra, Bhaumavara, on Monday, and Amavasya. It comes only once in many years. So long as the Nakshatra goes on you must do the japa in writing. I will not tell you its benefit, but it is very good. In Mrityunjaya japa you can imagine the third eye of Shiva. We invoke the third eye of Lord Shiva. The experts add a little to the Mrityunjaya japa and make it Mahamrityunjaya mantra. You have to learn the method from them. If you have any disease, or you fear that you are going to meet with an accident (before you actually face it you generally face it mentally and have nervous accidents, or it may not actually happen at all), this Mahamrityunjaya mantra is very good.

Shiva gave one mantra. It is called Ramtaraka mantra, *Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram*. It was the mantra of Samarth Guru Ramdas. By this you can remove factors which disturb peace in the house, quarrels between the family members, etc. Generally, in domestic life conflicts happen. It is like a delicate machine, its parts keep on getting out of order, sometimes you may not get spare parts even. At that time, this japa brings peace in the family and gives good understanding to the people, makes them successful and gives common sense. There are thirteen letters in this mantra.

There are many more mantras which we have to recite at times and by their timely repetition we can remove our difficulties. Normally, you do not know the cause of your troubles. You have disease, you go to the doctor, but the cause is different. Our diseases and troubles are tremendous. In order to know them and their causes, you must know that because of many actions done in past lives we are suffering. Recitation of many mantras is not against yoga, you may repeat thirty-two times Gayatri, one mala of Mrityunjaya, one mala of *Sri Rama*. You may repeat a few other mantras. After that, if you practise meditation and ajapa you will definitely find a very great change. It will be easier to enter into meditation. As you practise japa the tensions, fears and doubts will subside automatically. The troubles of life will not disturb you. Even if you try to stop it, the mind wanders into the problems at the time of meditation. If you say you worship the sun and recite Gayatri, and, therefore, you do not recite the Vishnu mantra, you are wrong. This is intellectual confusion created by our Western brothers mostly. Most of them, though good at reasoning, are ciphers in faith. If you worship many gods and recite many mantras, you are doing more justice to your inner personality, which is full of conflicts. It is better if you give a variety of mantra recitations to your mind and keep it occupied. When a man suffers from ailments he is always conscious of it. His son is sick, there is trouble with his job, dissatisfaction in his married life, his whole energy is

wasted in brooding over these things. I ask such people to do the Durga path, Gayatri japa, Mrityunjaya and Ram nam japa, recitation of the *Bhagavad Gita*. You may argue that you believe in one God and not in many gods. You are saying the right thing, but is your faith strong? Will your faith give you relief from the tensions of life? If yes, you are free. I know the truth behind many gods. I am not advocating a faith, but I am saying that which will benefit you most.

College boys come to me and complain of certain diseases. I ask them to read *Hanuman Chalisa*; the results are positive. After reading it, a change comes over them in the physical cells, mind and inner body. If you ask a psychologist he will tell you that its reading removes the idea from your mind, because Hanuman is vajra deva. Many people come to me and ask about the marriage of their daughters. I prescribe Katyayani mantra japa. A mental or subjective change comes to the girl. It is controversial how it happens, but the results are positive.

Some people complain of quarrels in the house. The wife does not listen. In-laws cause trouble. If you have the fear that you have many enemies, do *Devi Kavacha Path*. There comes a subjective change. Whether one is freed from the idea that one has no enemies or whether the mental vibrations change the other party, one does not know. But I am clear about this. When there is the figure of three and six between the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law, at midnight when she is in deep sleep, close your eyes and send telepathic suggestions and soothing vibrations to her. Do not say, "You are bad, I will correct you." Say politely, "Mother, I do not want to quarrel with you. I came here to remain under your protection, but there is something wrong in me, or you, or perhaps in both of us. So, let us do something and solve this problem." Send your mental thoughts every day. You will know the result within fifteen days. There will be temperamental change in you, because you are prepared to make peace with her. Again, suppose someone comes and says, "I have many enemies, people are eager to kill me."

Let him do *Devi Kavacha Path*. After fifteen days he will write that the man came and said, “In your mind there is some misunderstanding, but let us go independently with peace.” Do you believe that thoughts travel? People even on the last bench are listening to my talks. Holy, loving and peace making thoughts also travel. Evil thoughts also travel. They reach sooner. For fifteen days, think ill of a person. He will become suspicious of you. Therefore, by japa mantras, your bhavanas also travel and it works. So remember three points in japa:

1. Japa has a devata. Do not doubt or reason. You have no authority to deny this unless you can logically prove that it is not so.
2. Mantra can be awakened.
3. By awakening mantra we can fulfil our desires.

After the mantra has provided you with peace and prosperity, can you forget God? No. Bhakti grows slowly. People come to me with selfishness. I realize their difficulties, but after their difficulties are solved, they develop attachment for me.

So well, let us do a little practice of japa now. Avoid second and fifth fingers. Do not cross the sumeru. Do japa and maintain awareness.



Psychic Sleep

Psychic sleep is an easy and useful method of giving peace to the body and mind. It is variously known as shavasana, yoga nidra and depth relaxation. It is a unique method of complete relaxation. It is also one of the finest aids to sense withdrawal. If you have a guru by your side to instruct you in shavasana, he can lead you to the highest meditation. The guru can take you off from passing phases of consciousness to other finer and higher realms. Although he cannot lead you to samadhi, he can prepare you adequately for that.

Much of our tragedies belong to the sphere of psyche, because we suffer on account of self-hypnotism created by opinions, self-consciousness, prejudices, false notions of poverty, pomp and sufferings, delusions and the like. You will find shavasana very much a process of dehypnotization – almost an effective counteraction to many negative auto-suggestions.

Those who will learn this exercise under a guru will progress in their spiritual meditation. Since this kriya contributes to all-round relaxation, there can be no two opinions about this truth, that shavasana is a strong foundation of meditation.

Those who want to reform their lives and make their resolves gain potential may do so by psychic sleep. Those who sincerely want to mould their character and wish to give up bad habits will also be greatly benefited.

Due to the very nature of their duties doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen accumulate immense muscular and mental tensions in their daily profession. They will be greatly benefited by the practice of shavasana. Shavasana is a wonderful psychological cure for those who suffer from insomnia, or false notions of insomnia, as well as disturbances in sleep.

What is the difference between the direct sleep and the psychic sleep? Normally, when we go to sleep, we just do it without quietening our mind. The influx of the blood, tensions and congestions remain unsettled in our being. In normal sleep our day-to-day irregularities remain unsettled and unadjusted, but yoga nidra is really attained when our tensions are eased, blood circulation is calmed down and other congestions rendered clear by any scientific method. Therefore, shavasana brings you good and qualitative sleep. You will not complain that you had no sleep. One who practises yoga nidra does not feel sleeplessness at all. The practices of psychic sleep should be learnt properly under an adept yogi who can explain to you the psychic processes.



Yoga nidra is a means of contacting the source of self-knowledge and inspiration lying within each person. It is a technique of self-induced dreaming in which the treasure-house of our consciousness can be systematically illumined, explored and then used to enrich our daily life.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Hatha Yoga

Hatha does not denote obstinacy. *Ha* stands for surya, pingala nadi or the vital energy, *prana*. *Tha* stands for chandra, ida nadi or the mental energy. Hatha yoga is meant to affect harmony between the discordant principles in the nervous system.

Sushumna is the central nervous system. If purity, peace, harmony and strength prevail in the nervous system sushumna will be awakened. Gheranda, Goraksha and others have composed textbooks on hatha yoga.

Hatha yoga consists of neti, dhauti, basti, kapalbhati, trataka and nauli, also known by the name *shatkarma*. These practices of hatha yoga help in the elimination of accumulated toxins. The first of the kriyas in hatha yoga is neti kriya. By neti kriya when the nasal membrane is rubbed, the sensation vibrates through the brain and awakens the entire system, thus removing all congestion, contractions and depressions.

There are various methods of practising neti, such as jala neti, sutra neti, dugdha neti, ghrita neti and tel neti.

Jala neti is practised with cold water first. You can also practise jala neti with tepid water. After jala neti you can go for pranayama. The cold will be cured and the infection and inflammation of the membrane will be removed.

Neti kriya is a simple method to cure the nasal diseases. Take a rubber catheter and take it out from the mouth through each nostril. You can also rub it for a while.

There is another method of neti with milk. It is almost a definite cure for various forms of nasal diseases such as cold, inflammation and sinusitis. Of course, this should be done after jala neti and simple pranayama. It has been observed that eyesores, cerebral depression and nasal infections have been successfully cured by milk neti.

Ladies in our country put a few drops of lukewarm oil into the nasal passage when one is infected by cold and consequent sneezing. In facial paralysis sniffing the ghee in through the nose is found extremely helpful.

Now about dhauti. It is a method of washing the internal system. Jala dhauti is one such method by which the stomach is given a thorough wash by means of warm saline water. The whole process consists of drinking about two seers (about 1.8 litre) of water and vomiting the whole thing out by means of rubbing the tongue. The practice is too simple to learn. One can pick up the technique in a day. Care should be taken as regards to the diet because wrong food stuffs will undo the good effect acquired through the kriya.

Varisara dhauti is a complete system of internal cleaning. It is done by means of salted hot water, as much as five seers, or even more. The entire process consists of drinking the water and evacuating the same through stools. This should be learned under an expert master.

Vastra dhauti is a method of washing and exciting the stomach by a process in which a lengthy bandage is slowly taken into the stomach and churned by taking recourse to nauli kriya. Though a panacea for asthmatics, it is not advisable for one to practise it daily. Those practising varisara need not at all do vastra dhauti. In my opinion it is a simpler and better substitute and device for hridaya and danda dhauti.

Agnisar dhauti is quite a different type of kriya. It is in fact an abdominal exercise aimed at stimulating intestinal peristalsis. It is practised in vajrasana. The whole process is a continued expansion and contraction of the abdominal group in a state of breath expulsion.

Vatsara dhauti is a specialized technique of gulping the air into the stomach by plavini pranayama, retaining the same for some time in the stomach itself and then evacuating the entire load of air, either through the anus or through the mouth.

Sustained practice of agnisar leads to uddiyana. When uddiyana is fairly perfected, one can take to nauli kriya very easily. It is not possible to learn nauli from a book. It is such a kriya by which the entire abdominal group, especially the rectus abdomini, is toned properly.

Basti may be termed a yogic enema. The peculiarity of this technique is that the practitioner sucks water in through the anus by doing nauli kriya and again evacuates the same through stools. In the beginning, however, a douche is also necessary.

Just as an expeller removes bad air from a room, even so the brain is shaken by the process of kapalbhati. One can practise kapalbhati along with moorchha pranayama. There is no inhalation in the practice of kapalbhati. You contract your lungs by force and expel the carbon. There are two ways of practising this. The simple method of a hatha yogi is to expel the breath, but a raja yogi takes his awareness to chidakasha after final expulsion. This additional practice removes certain cerebral tensions.

There are various methods of trataka. One can hold trataka on water, fire, earth, sky, ether, air, a dot, light, chidakasha and the like. Each has its own cluster of significant attributes. Certain practices improve the eye sight, while others are helpful in removing certain cerebral congestions and reviving memory.

In fact, trataka should be practised and can be practised on any steady object. It depends upon your requirement whether you need a shining substance or a dark object.

Trataka on a shivalingam of *sphatik*, or crystal stone, is considered to be the best of all forms of trataka.

Trataka is not intently looking into the object. It is looking at the object with awareness and mindfulness, as you do while looking into a mirror.

Complaints are received that trataka, at times, injures the eyes. It is because the sadhaka has overstrained his eyes. If he looks into the object as he looks into a mirror upon his own reflection, with simple awareness and mindfulness, trataka will help him immensely.

It is not necessary to enter into analysis of the object of trataka during the practice. The proper way of trataka is looking into the object with awareness and mindfulness.



Nada Yoga

Nada yoga is the science of sound. The fundamental principle of nada yoga is that our world is based on one *nada*, sound, and that the entire universe is a system of the sound principle.

All of us, who are not materialist in outlook, believe that the body is not the ultimate. It is only a gross layer. There is a subtler body than the gross one, the pranic or the vital body. You know what prana is. It is the life principle and is divided into five categories: prana, apana, vyana, samana and udana. This division is based according to the functions of prana. There are also still subtler subdivisions, five in number, which are responsible for acts like sneezing and winking. These are the actions of the same vital energy, *prana*.

Beyond our physical body, a mental body is recognized to exist, through which we are able to think and understand. This constitutes the mental layer of our consciousness. Subtler than this, is the layer of intelligence of the astral body. This is often experienced in dreams or visions. The fifth is the subtlest layer, the layer of absolute consciousness. These are technically described as the annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya and anandamaya koshas. Therefore, those who believe in yoga assert that the physical body is not everything, but just a beginning, a starting point.

Likewise, the external sounds are not the only sounds. In our body there are infinite sound vibrations on the different

layers of consciousness, the permutations and combinations of which go to form this body.

The nada yogis say that in the beginning there was one sound and that sound was *Om*, and it became this universe. Those who have read the Bible will be familiar with the observation, "In the beginning, there was the Word." Thus, there was nothing but sound. The *Om*, or the cosmic sound, vibrated all throughout and everywhere. These vibrations of *Om* created the first sound principle and out of this principle emanated matter.

Thus, according to the tenets of the nada yogis, the entire body and the entire creation is nothing but the solidification of sound matter. This is technically called the Nada Brahman.

If you care to study the science of music, you will come to know that every sound has a form, it is not a mere vibration. The notes of music can be solidified. Every sound can be given a form. Just as you see a stone, a chair, a leaf, even so, the sound can be converted into energy. This energy can again be converted into sound. The sound can be converted into an object and the object can be disintegrated into atomic particles. Those who are familiar with the theory of Einstein's physics will bear this out.

Thus, we know that whatever things exist in this world, their ultimate substance and nucleus is one, only the forms are different. All things, all objects, though their forms are different, have a common inner substance. The nada yogis tell you that all your constituents, which have assumed a gross form, are based upon the vibrations of the sound principle. This constitutes their metaphysics and philosophy.

In the yoga shastras it is said that somewhere in us is a sound. It is expressed as the inner voice, the voice from heaven, the whispers from the unknown, the *akasha vani*, and in everyday language, as the language of the soul. It is the voice of the soul, the voice of pure reason and we should not confuse it with other things.

In our spiritual body, there is a centre from where someone who is sitting, speaks. When and with whom he

speaks cannot be explained, defined or described. The practice of nada yoga makes our mind subtler and subtler, so that it becomes completely purified of all objectified notions. It is then that we know and hear the 'ultimate sound'.

When you start this practice, it first appears that you hear a sound like the one produced by the working of a textile mill. You close your eyes and try to listen to such a sound. Thereafter, if you still try to hear the inner voice more intently, you will hear something akin to the chirping sound of birds. Later on, you will experience the full throated nightingale singing, but the question arises as to how to investigate the sounds.

The simplest method is to try to have a grip over the first available sound, whatever it may be, and concentrate upon it. After some time you will feel it coming closer and becoming louder, and from the background you will also experience another faint sound. It will indeed be very faint, but the moment you apprehend it, leave aside the original sound and concentrate upon the faint sound. After some time, you will feel it coming closer and becoming louder in volume. After some concentration you will also experience another faint sound. As before, you have to grasp this sound and concentrate upon it till another sound emerges. Gradually, you will be chasing a number of sounds, one after the other.

I have only mentioned three sounds but other sounds are those of the bell, flute and conch. The *Hamsa Upanishad* describes ten types of sounds, beginning first with the sound of a cricket, and these are supposed to be the sounds normally heard by the practitioner.

Everyone has a different experience of sounds. So, what specific type of sound is heard is not of much importance, but is useful as an indication of one's progress.

There are different methods of practising nada yoga. First, you practise the bhramari pranayama. You have to inhale deeply and when you exhale, you produce a humming sound and concentrate upon it at the throat pit, the location of the vishuddhi chakra. This sound will continue for about thirty seconds.

Here, you don't have to be mindful of sounds as you do in the ajapa system of meditation. In ajapa, you are supposed to be mindful of what you are doing. In nada yoga you have to proceed mechanically till the first sound is produced. Then you have to concentrate on this sound. This constitutes the first stage.

In the second stage, you have to plug your ears with the second fingers, breathe in and as before, at the time of exhaling produce the humming sound. The teeth should be kept slightly apart.

Keep on producing the sound and then concentrate on the vibrations. Also, try to investigate some other sound which is at the back of that vibration. In the first stage, if you create *Om* vibrations, you may, with a little attention, discover a faint bird-like sound.

In the third stage, you have to keep the ears plugged without making an audible sound. Try to listen to the first sound, whatever its nature might be. Go on listening and feel that the sound is getting closer and louder. That is the first sound. Now, in its background you will hear another sound. It is important that the third meditation of nada yoga should be practised with the ears plugged and without making any audible sounds.

In the fourth stage, do not plug the ears or produce any sound. At about eleven in the night or at four in the morning, take a bath or have a wash and sit in any comfortable posture. Try to catch the first available sound. You should feel the first sound and let it get louder. Then, the second faint sound will emanate. Concentrate on it. Give up concentrating on the first sound. Let the faint sound get louder. Again, a third faint sound will emanate. Likewise, you have to go on meditating on sounds, discovering more and more subtler sounds.

It is better if you practise nada yoga before practising ajapa. By the practice of nada yoga, the confusions of the brain are removed, the mind gets peace and meditation becomes successful.

Antar Mouna: Inner Silence

First process: thought introspection

When you concentrate and try to unify the vagrant tendencies of your mind, sometimes you feel the strain. Because of that strain, you get a headache or some other complaint. Therefore, while practising concentration, you have to evolve a method by which there may be no strain. Just as a tired person goes to bed and falls asleep, and does not have to struggle to go to sleep, even so there are various methods for achieving spontaneous concentration and meditation.

The best method of concentration starts with prayer. When we start concentration directly and abruptly the influx of blood abruptly increases in the brain. Various ideas keep on haunting the mind and hamper meditation. All the impressions of actions done during the day come rushing up to the surface of the mind. If you want to meditate on *Om* you naturally desire that, except *Om*, nothing else should come to your mind, but for various reasons, your daily experiences and impressions come to you during meditation. Therefore, the best time for meditation is the brahmamuhurta.

It is also necessary that the mind should slumber partially when you start the practice of meditation. If there is controllable drowsiness concentration will be keen and better. At night when drowsiness overpowers you, if you meditate on your ishta devata, you will succeed immensely.

In meditation, therefore, you should not start concentration before you have entered into a state of partial drowsiness. It is better to meditate in the morning between four and six.

Some people meditate at odd hours of the day. This is no doubt good, but you must have experienced that by practising concentration during these hours there is some tension felt by the brain. In fact, meditation should be spontaneous. It should be an effortless evolvment. If you practise the right technique of concentration from the very beginning you will have no difficulty.

Therefore, the first practice to bring about this state is *antar mouna*, meaning 'inner silence'. *Antar mouna* has many graduated stages. In the beginning you are not to fight with your thoughts, but to maintain an impartial attitude. If thoughts come to your mind let them do so. With closed eyes remain a witness of various thoughts coming into your mind and do not try consciously to control the thought processes.

Do not be disturbed when various thoughts overwhelm you. Nor should you try to trim or eliminate those thoughts. Just close your eyes and become a witness. Feel as if the thoughts are passing before you gradually as a goods train does. After some time this practice will become very interesting.

Before you take to this practice you should, first of all, relax yourself mentally. You may sit in any asana you feel easy and comfortable. Remember that in whatever posture you concentrate, the spinal column must be kept straight. Then relax yourself mentally. You may not understand what mental relaxation is. Imagine how relaxed you will feel when you come back from a hectic business round in the scorching sun and relax on a soft sofa in an air-conditioned room. You have to be aware of this type of relaxation. Except this, you have to do nothing in the process of relaxation. This is preparatory to meditation. Relaxation is an aid to concentration, so is auto-suggestion. Gradually you will learn the technique. Be seated either upon a cushion, or upon an easy chair and

feel that you don't have to do anything and that you are experiencing joy. Thus, try to relax yourself mentally.

In this process of inner silence you should be aware that you are thinking; "I am thinking" – this consciousness has to be constantly kept alive in the mind. The only caution to be taken is not to become identical with the thoughts. The awareness of the thinking process should be maintained all throughout. "I am thinking" should be the constant awareness.

This is the first practice in inner silence. This practice evolves a technique which operates subjectively and brings about a state of cessation in the process of thinking. In case of impure thoughts, awaken an awareness that you are only witnessing them while they are passing through your mental plane. If you do not become identical with such thoughts, they will be suspended without any effort. You should not be disturbed by them. You should also not feel elated by good thoughts and think that your meditation is very nice, just because only good thoughts come to you. Thoughts of any type, shade and dimension, whether good or bad, should be merely observed without any involvement.

During the process of witnessing the thoughts there comes, sometimes, a state of mental suspension and for a moment we forget that we were witnessing the thoughts. Then confusion occurs in the realm of awareness. We do not know as to what we are doing. Sometimes, we start repeating the mantra. Later on, we realize that we were practising inner silence. Then we restart the practice. Again and again the chain of suspension follows. In order to remove this confusion in awareness, the only way to keep on is to practise inner silence. By practising continuously for a few days, inner silence becomes clear and ultimately, the last stage of 'seeing the thoughts' is achieved.

After a successful round of practice, thoughts will no more remain as gross ideas, but they will appear in their astral forms as visions. Every thought then will become an astral reality with subtle dimensions.

Inner silence starts with relaxation as the first practice. Secondly, you have to become an impartial seer of your thoughts. Thirdly, do not be disturbed by any thought that comes to your mind, whether good or bad. Fourthly, whenever thoughts come to you in their astral forms, take it that your present practice is complete.

You will be able to see your thoughts by constant practice of inner silence, but this is not to be regarded as concentration. This is only a preparatory exercise before going in for actual concentration. After achieving this state of experience, you should start meditation on your ishta devata, whether nirakara or sakara.

Now you will find, that it is very easy to have a clear vision of the astral form of your ishta devata. You can continue your meditation on the the ishta devata as long as you want and as long as you can.

The centre of meditation is the brain. If there is more, or less flow of blood in the brain, then meditation will not be possible. It is not possible to point out what should be the right proportion of blood circulation in the brain which would be congenial for meditation. I have no instrument to find this out, but the saints have found out a clue. When our thoughts assume the shape of dreams and visions float, then it is regarded as the ideal condition of brain for meditation. So long as your thought does not materialize, or assume a form, you are not regarded as ready for concentration and you may not be able to meditate easily.

Now I will tell you how to practise this kriya, and what should be your attitude at that time. Close your eyes and try to relax mentally. The technique is to feel that you are going to take rest. Do not entertain any strenuous thought in your mind as you generally do. Experience peace and a feeling of rest, joy and comfort. The more you are able to relax, the more you will be able to practise concentration. In the relaxation try to feel that you are sitting on a chair and your body is resting on it. This means that you should be aware of yourself and your position. This is called self-awareness. Your

limbs should also relax. This may take some time. Relaxation in itself is a process which is strenuous in the beginning, but peaceful afterwards.

Try to visualize the *chidakasha*, mental screen, with closed eyes. Is this chidakasha changing its colour or not? Do you see any star or anything else there? What do you see in chidakasha? Some see stars, some see lights, some see a glare, some see only darkness. Never mind whether you see anything or not. Just keep on concentrating on chidakasha. Many thoughts will arise. Let them. They may be thoughts, sounds or different feelings. You may experience an itching sensation in your body or a tremor in your system. Try to be a mere witness of all that. Do not identify yourself with any sound, sensation or thought that arises in your mind. When visualization of chidakasha is over, then you should go in for the actual practice of inner silence already explained.

Second process: thought regulation

Many thoughts arise in the mind. Sometimes they arise with a compelling force and it seems as if some unseen force within us is causing their upsurge. We may be averse to certain thoughts of passion; we may not like to enter into worries and brooding, but in spite of all sincere efforts, we fail to check the waves.

This is proof that we lack control over the mind and that we must evolve some effective method for settling these vagrant forces in their proper place. If this is not done in time, then the exhaustion will reach its breaking point and as a result, sedatives, hypnotics and narcotics will have to be introduced to ease the mental tension. If thought waves are not regulated in time, they become part of our habits and under their hypnotic lullaby we spend – nay, waste – years after years. We only rise to the critical situation when every possibility has gone beyond our hands.

The series of thoughts assail us unawares. We wake up at the instance of nervous breakdowns, mental fever, neurosis and the like. It is too late for us to overcome them.

It is beyond the power of any physician. If care is taken well before the crisis takes place and thought regulation is rendered as a part of our mental habit, then we can keep away various mental ailments successfully.

What is the remedy then? Yoga has prescribed a method by the application of which an aspirant can become the master of his thoughts. He need not control his thoughts. He need not kill his mind. He must only attain complete mastery over his thoughts. He who has attained mastery over his mind keeps it as his trained servant. When the mind is properly kept under control, it can help you in many ways. One of the methods to train the mind is by following the second practice in the art of inner silence.

The second practice of inner silence consists of creating a particular thought voluntarily and dwelling upon it for some time, and then rejecting it altogether. Here, you voluntarily create any thought of your liking and after thinking it for some minutes, you set it aside by your will force.

It is much better if you start with lower thoughts. That is to say, you should voluntarily create and dwell upon the themes of jealousy, anger, greed and the like for some time, and finally set them aside with a mental stroke. It is because the mind is very much used to sticking to lower thoughts and, in fact, lower thoughts act as various centres of gravity to our consciousness. Pious thoughts are soon forgotten and the mind finds it easy to slip away from good thoughts, while it is almost a task to detach its interest from lower thoughts. Thoughts of jealousy, anger, greed, fear, emotion, passion, pride and the like seem to have greater affinity with the mind, while peace, compassion, love, forgiveness and the like are usually missed by the mind during meditation. Good resolves are always forgotten, while evil intentions stay on.

Practise in this way: pose a particular thought. Retain the same thought for some time with vivid imagination, then dispose it. If you practise this method for some time, you will learn a technique of removing any permanent thought that

haunts your mind. This method of inner silence is extremely useful. Along with this, when this practice of inner silence is over, you have to meditate on your ishta devata. I have already told you that it is possible to have the inner vision of the deity whom you worship only if you have attained to that proper stage of concentration and realization.

Now you have to practise inner silence. Pose any thought. Retain it for some time and then dispose it. Go on doing it. Choose your thought if you want to, but one caution. Do not become one with your thought. Be conscious throughout of what you are doing. Let not any thought come without being willed. Reject such thoughts which come to you of their own accord. On the other hand, you should pose a thought at will and retain it for some time, and then dispose it. Do not get attached to the thought. Practise it with detachment. Have a vivid imagination of what you are thinking. Sometimes, while thinking there will be confusion. You will not be able to testify what you think. When this happens you must at once meditate upon your ishta devata.

Keep in view a few important points for meditation on the ishta devata. Try to think of the particular deity through general observances. Think of the whole picture of your ishta devata, the place where it is kept and the surroundings. Have a vivid imagination of all this, from general to particular. Thereafter, the same practice may be repeated according to your convenience.

Third process: thought suspension

Now we will discuss the third process. But, before that, we shall tackle a few practical problems which occur during the process of relaxation and inner silence.

The main problem is sleep, which you experience when you relax. First drowsiness dawns, then deep slumber. For those who want to remove hypertension, of course sleep is necessary, but those who seek spiritual evolution will have to find a remedy for the trouble. If you want to attain samadhi and spiritual enlightenment, or want to contact the astral

body, the mysterious kundalini and other higher forms of meditation, it becomes all the more essential to know the technique to overcome the difficulty. The complaint of all the aspirants is that, when they succeed in achieving inner silence, they fall asleep and realize it only afterwards when the awareness revives. No doubt they feel fresh, but spiritual evolution is arrested there itself. Even in the case of earnest aspirants, their spiritual progress is arrested because they enter into slumber. Householders, who have to discharge various duties, remain ever busy and are in continuous strain, naturally fall asleep even with a little concentration.

Then, there is another difficulty. That is if the consciousness does not slumber partially, inner silence is difficult to achieve. There is difficulty in both ways. The mind has to be drowsy to a certain degree and at the same time one has to remain careful that it does not sleep. Therefore, it is necessary for those who want to avoid sleep during meditation to bear in mind a few points.

First, you will have to practise detachment. You will have to reject that continuity of thought by constant and persistent practice. This is one solution.

Second solution is this. When you feel that you are about to sleep, start pranayama with kumbhaka. Do it to the ratio 1:4:2. Do it three or four times. Then practise concentration. This is for those who face waves of depression due to hypertension and continuous thinking. If you minimize the degree of depression, you will be able to visualize the object of your meditation very clearly.

Some people sit in padmasana and meditate for hours at a stretch and feel themselves in samadhi. No, this is not samadhi. This is the aftereffect of the strain of a day's life. You can, of course, remove your mental depression by this suspension, but you cannot go forward on the spiritual path. You can also practise some asanas, such as sarvangasana or sirshasana. With asanas we can check the causes responsible for sleep. Get up from bed, take a wash and sit in any asana. Then there will be no suspension.

Some aspirants sit for meditation, but do not know as to what they are doing. Some aspirants, having heard about the kundalini, desire to awaken it and apply extra pressure. There is bound to be depression. Therefore, in order to avoid sleep during meditation, light dinner, yogasanas and pranayama will help you a great deal.

There is also another yogic method for checking sleep. That is decarbonization of the system by the process of deep breathing in ujjayi, as is done by a sleeping healthy person.

When you meditate with closed eyes and visions begin to appear, then there is temporary suspension of awareness. Again visions, then suspension and once again visions. All this happens in the primary phases of meditation because samskaras float upon the mental surface.

You want to forget many unwanted things. You reject them and, therefore, they go in the background. In due course this brings about bad aftereffects. Either rationalize your problems, or sublimate them by total detachment, but your dislike for a person does not mean that he has gone out of your mind. Rather, he is very much in your mind. His memories will disturb you in meditation. So, whatever difficulties we have, we should annihilate their impression, either by rationalization or sublimate by detachment. This is another factor responsible for sleep and visions in the initial stages of meditation. The only solution to this problem is to render the mind free from day-to-day tensions by various methods of jnana yoga and then take to yogic meditation. Sleep is no doubt good, so is also the expression of astral contents in the form of visions, but as the seeker looks for higher attainments, he will have to go beyond all forms of relaxation. The following practice of inner silence is, in fact, a departure from relaxation and a first step towards actual meditation.

Now let us take up the third process of inner silence. Close the eyes first. Concentrate on the chidakasha and go on seeing everything on it. You will experience various shades of light, stars, illumination and astral figures. You should remain a witness of these experiences. The

chidakasha, or the astral plane is before you. You can project your subconscious mind on it if you have a deep sense of meditation.

Set aside every thought which comes to you. You should remain conscious of the incoming thoughts throughout. You are engaged in setting them aside. At the same time, you are aware of what is taking place within the astral realms. If you can do this, you can step on to meditation. You will not have to labour much.

Then follow visions of astral events. You are standing at the gate. You are seeing your thoughts coming to you. Your inner chamber is open from all sides. Thoughts can enter from any side. You have to take a central position and from there, have a look everywhere. From which side is the thought coming? When you see a particular thought lurking, stop it. After that start meditation on ishta.

If, however, you get even a little success in this sadhana, you will have no necessity to meditate on the ishta. The form of ishta will automatically arise from within. If you do this faithfully you will reach the nirvichara stage.

Have constant awareness of chidakasha. Also, see the astral patterns forming on it. If you observe them for some time, you will understand what I mean by astral patterns. You will experience various invisible vibrations floating across the chidakasha. Gradually, you should try to become more and more aware of chidakasha. Let your consciousness become deep and intense, so much so, that you do not feel like taking your mind away from chidakasha even for a moment. There should be no analysis of the experience of the astral plane whatsoever. And thus, when you keep on observing the state of nothingness, you will realize various astral realities, which remained out of sight so far. There comes a state of mind when the vast fields of astral realization are left open to you and the whole stock of latent knowledge is apprehended.

When astral figures start floating on chidakasha, at once take a turn towards the ishta devata and meditate in calmness and silence.

You can repeat the whole process again. A beginner should never overdo this exercise since this meditation is quite different from relaxation. With this exercise you complete the preliminaries of relaxation and enter into the first phase of meditation. It is only after perfecting this class of dhyana that you should take to further meditations, which are higher and deeper in comparison to this one.

However, I strike a note of warning to all those who are keen to pursue meditation to the extent of realizing samadhi. They should always start meditation after the processes of scientific relaxation have been successfully gone through. If not, they will always talk of sleep, lethargy and failures that follow an abrupt meditation.



You do not know the mind. You do not know the traits that are in you. You do not know the elements, quality and substances of the mind. It is necessary that a free expression should be accorded in the mind. That is possible in antar mouna. With your eyes opened or closed, you must allow the thought processes to move through. Don't stop anything. Don't be sorry and don't be happy about anything. Disidentify yourself from the thinking process.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Chidakasha Vidya

Of the several techniques of meditation in yoga sadhana chidakasha vidya is a powerful and self-absorbing technique. In the present day, it has been revived and resurrected by Paramahansa Swami Satyanandaji, who gives practical training to his disciples.

We find references of chidakasha vidya in the Vedas and in ancient scriptures, like the *Shiva Purana* and in some of the major Upanishads. Our ancient scriptures are accused of being obscure in not having revealed things in any open and explicit manner; but that had always been the recognized way and tradition of our ancient rishis. These scriptures were only means to indicate the path, or the practices, and their actual initiation into practices was left to be taught by the guru to the shishya. It was rightly believed that no intellectual comprehension can replace the need for actual practices, because it was also a matter of inner personal experience and therefore not susceptible to transcription. It is for this reason that great wisdom and scientific eternal truths were, therefore, concealed in their brief symbolical mantras and sutras. The truth was broadly indicated, but the technique to achieve and arrive at it was always left to be taught by the tradition of guru and shishya.

Rightful recipient

The Upanishads strictly forbid and say that the secret science of the Upanishads should be imparted to no one except

to the son and disciple. Only a devoted son or a devoted disciple is the right recipient of the ancient wisdom of the rishis, because the necessary mental equipments to receive the truth must exist in the recipient.

Again, the knowledge or the *vidya*, science, is to be imparted only to those who have extreme love and faith in God and a burning aspiration to know the truth and thus, must attribute the same faith and love which they have for God to their guru also. It is only when such a relation between the guru and disciple is established that wisdom is unveiled by the words of the guru to the disciple.

Chidakasha vidya is a secret technique of meditation for self-realization. Vidya also means *dhyana*, or meditation and *chidakasha* is the abstract, unconscious existence of the mind plus the self. When you close your eyes you see a vast panorama of darkness inside. In the Bible it is referred to as 'the dark night of the soul'. This abstract, untouchable, unperceivable existence of the self, finding expression and manifestation in the form of lone and abiding awareness of darkness is *chidakasha* in guise.

The darkness of ignorance that is *avidya* covers the 'light of the soul'. The disciple has to pass and penetrate through this darkness till he sees the light eternal. The words of the guru will only serve as a guide, but the disciple himself has to travel through the darkness with all faith and love in guru's words.

When you sit for the practice of *chidakasha vidya*, with eyes closed and in a comfortable posture, you will first enter into darkness. The Upanishad says, "Those who worship *avidya* enter into darkness or sleep, and those who worship *vidya*, *dhyana*, they also enter into darkness", which permeates within when the eyes are closed, but this is no perennial darkness. It is evanescent. It changes and takes a variety of colours according to the degree and intensity of concentration.

Symbol manifestation

If you try to practise *chidakasha vidya*, you will see fog, smoke, darkness, sun, stars, air, fire, fireflies, flying birds, electric

sparks, crystal, moon and many other things gradually. You may see many things according to the deep impressions that are hidden deep within you and the samskaras which may have been lying accumulated in the subconscious and unconscious personality. Therefore, generally an initiate in yoga sees, in the background of chidakasha, the above mentioned symbols, either on suggestion of his guru, or by his own effort. When the suggestion works the symbols are seen in imagination, but a stage is reached through deep concentration when these things are actually visualized by the sadhaka in meditation. All these symbols are concentrated forms of *chitta vritti*, mental modification, which reveals itself in a variety of ways. We find a reference to these experiences of meditation in the Upanishads:

Neehaar-dhoomaarkaani laanalaanaam

Khadyota-vidyut-sphatik shasheenaam

Etaani-roopaani purah-saraani

Brahmani-abhivyaktikaraani yoge.

You will find that the chidakasha vidya, which is being popularly taught at Bihar School of Yoga in Munger, Bihar, is not an innovation but it is a very ancient and yet a very scientific, secret technique of meditation of self-realization, which is identical with God-realization. If you pursue earnestly with faith and devotion you will see chidakasha illumined, and on some glorious day you may receive the 'light of your soul' like a shining lamp, a *deepak*.

That state is a state of enduring bliss and contentment of unimaginable delight, peace and power. One becomes *apta kama*, having renounced all worldly desires, and full of realized knowledge which is known as *ritambhara prajna*, the truth obtained in samadhi, in the yoga shastras.

Two essential requirements

For the practice of chidakasha vidya you require to do two things at the very outset. Firstly, you must have unwavering devotion and faith in your guru. This is an essential, yet a

very difficult condition. And secondly, *asana jaya*, mastery over one posture for meditation, is also necessary. In modern times, we are taught to think before we leap, to taste before we pay, but the traditional relations between the guru and disciple admit no such preferences. Here the guru is the sole director and the supreme arbitrator. But we need not be discouraged by our inability to repose our sole faith in the guru. The chidakasha vidya, apart from its spiritual value, is psychotherapy and the key to God-realization. Its psychological aspect would be more attractive, interesting and inspiring to modern readers than the mystical aspect, which all the time asserts itself, goads and reminds you of God. This is the case, even if you do not feel any necessity to see God in this very life and may feel that God is a far off reality from you and God-realization requires a lot of vairagya, tapas and sacrifice of worldly pleasures, and therefore is unreachable.

Even though your conviction is partially true the good results accruing out of the practice of chidakasha, after a little sacrifice, are worth aspiring for and possessing, whereas any other kind of achievement resulting out of indulging in worldly pleasures is futile and leads to misery, pain and sorrow. By eating too much you just invite cholera, dyspepsia, diarrhoea, dysentery, indigestion, gastric troubles, acidity and finally grey hair, which come out and pay homage to your achievements. Am I not true?

Well, you may now see for yourself why a yogi prefers to take a balanced diet instead of adopting and prescribing a free will code for himself. Does not indulgence in sensual pleasures land you into a plethora of aches, pains and troubles?

For the practice of chidakasha vidya you may even do without reposing your entire faith in your teacher, although that is essential for penetrating through the layers of avidya.

Your next requirement for this practice is the habit of sitting comfortably in one posture for long hours. At least more than half an hour's practice of earnest sadhana is

absolutely necessary. This is known as asana jaya, control of the posture. *Asana* means a sitting posture.

You may well ask, what if you change your posture during the meditation? Yes, you may, there is no bar to it, but that will bring your ingoing, upward consciousness at once down to the physical plane and will thus, require a fresh effort to go in again. Besides, the feeling of pain in limbs reminding us to change posture is a hindrance in the way of consciousness' inward journey. You cannot remain in the same posture for a long time if you have not perfected asanas. Coming out, even for seconds, will mean a fresh start. It is, therefore, advisable that a beginner sadhaka should aim at perfecting the asanas first.

How to perfect the asanas? Daily practice of a few yogasanas, pranayamas and nadi shodhana kriyas are an aid to conquest of the posture. Whatever is lacking thereafter is made up by deep concentration during the practice of chidakasha vidya.

The best asanas for meditation, in order of preference, are i) *siddhasana*, adept's pose, ii) *padmasana*, lotus pose, iii) *swastikasana*, cross pose, and iv) *sukhasana*, comfortable pose. You should select one of these for yourself and practise it, off and on, whenever you get time, so that you may get used to overcoming the pain likely to be caused during meditation practices. Siddhasana is the best and padmasana is the second best.

The elasticity and flexibility of the joints and spinal column are to a great extent responsible in securing perfection in asanas. Rigidity and stiffness of bones, limbs and ligaments are neither good for muscular health and resistance, nor for meditation. These defects will automatically be removed by regular practice of yogasanas and pranayamas.

Best time

The best time for the practice of chidakasha vidya is in the morning at five and at night after taking a full bath.

Importance of bath

A full bath with water has much significance and carries a direct impact on the mind. After a bath the mind feels refreshed. Even long sleep does not refresh the mind as much as a bath with cold water does. A cold water bath is very energizing, soothing and refreshing. Neither sleep, nor food can give you that nervous, emotional strength and freshness which a bath gives within a few minutes. Tiredness of body and mind are completely wiped out, and the mental state thus acquired is conducive to meditation.

Cold water is preferred because it has a direct effect on the nervous system of the body. The nerves contract when the skin is washed. All the time your body is generating energy. This is constantly being used up in your daily activities. The physical system thus gets heated by constant deployment in work. The functions of the body do not stop during our rest hours. Therefore, the most effective, natural, simple and vitalizing process is to wash the body with cold water. Identical results cannot be brought about by a hot water bath. Hot water dilates the nerves. Hot water is good for an ailing body, which requires fomentation and extra support of warmth for the body without losing it, but for a normal healthy body, cold water is a boon. If you consult the scientists and medical men, they may give you some precise scientific explanation of the benefits of cold water. If you have full faith and welcome feelings for cold water, it will never harm you. The use of cold water makes you immune from cold and cough. Those who fear cold water should not take a cold water bath. The importance here is stressed for success in meditation.

Mystic symbol

What is chidakasha? This term has to be comprehended in its correct manner. Proper significance has to be grasped before you can successfully undertake the practice. Chidakasha is made up of two words, 'chit' and 'akasha'. Chit here is not *chitta*, one of the constituents of the antahkarana. That is called mind stuff. But *chit* here means consciousness,

awareness and *akasha* is space. Our awareness extends in time and space and it is a portion of our subjective understanding. Chidakasha represents the inner firmament, the awareness which moves in infinite space, i.e. a consciousness which is all comprehensive. At present you may not be able to grasp the import, but as its practice intensifies you will understand it.

Western psychologists have tried to probe the human mind and discovered three layers: the conscious, the sub-conscious and the unconscious. Indian philosophers speak of the gross, subtle and causal bodies where consciousness remains, and also of the three states of waking, dreaming and sleeping. The fourth state they called transcendental, *turiya*. But these are broad classifications. The ancient sages had realized by experience that there are fourteen planes in which awareness, that is chit, functions. Your consciousness is on the sensual planes and, therefore, is extrovert. In sleep, your consciousness is there, but you are aware of it only when you wake up. The same is the case when you dream. As the chit, or the awareness becomes subtler it goes to the subtler and subtler regions till it becomes *turiyateeta*, i.e. pure consciousness.

It is in consonance with the evolution and involution process of prakriti. Just as from the unmanifest, *avyakta*, state prakriti manifests as mahat, ahamkara, buddhi, manas, tanmatras and ten senses, equally it reverts to its original state by process of involution. Similarly, our consciousness, which from its pure state has gone on from subtle to less subtle and finally the gross planes, goes back to its original state of purity. Chidakasha vidya is a sadhana to make the consciousness pure in its entirety. Therefore, when you withdraw from the field of gross, outward consciousness by pratyahara you begin to see symbols and visions. These are the processes within by which the impressions, gathered and deposited in the inner recesses of your being, the causal body or the unconscious, slowly come out. Even these astral experiences still have an element of grossness about them. You will thus see that chit is awareness and the extension of

awareness from a limited range of experience to a wider, subtler and more purified range, which is implied by akasha, is the aim of chidakasha vidya.

There is infinite space within us. When you close your eyes you are able to measure, to some extent, your infinite existence in the world in the form of chit or chetana, i.e. consciousness. With eyes closed your vision penetrates deeper. Your senses of hearing, smelling and other senses become, as it were, more refined. Chidakasha thus, is a personification of mysticism. It is a powerful mystic symbol. With its powers of imagination, thought, speculation and will, it can penetrate into any area of the world. When you dwell within, it is on the plane of chidakasha awareness that you are aware of your existence, although you are not able to see your gross material existence, namely the body and its organs. This subtle but lively experience of the self and its working does take place in the background of chidakasha. The infinite, undimensional, eternal space of chidakasha is a platform for the manifestation of your consciousness.

Yoga anatomy

It is desirable to have an idea of yoga anatomy before trying to understand what chit is. According to yoga anatomy, a man is constituted of twenty different elements. i) five *karmendriyas*, working organs, ii) five *jnanendriyas*, sense organs, iii) five *pranas*, vital forces, iv) four constituents of *antahkarana*, the subconscious stuff, and v) consciousness or spirit.

Man is made up of the following according to yoga anatomy (not philosophy): mouth, hands, excretory organ, generative organ, legs, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin, prana vayu, apana vayu, vyana vayu, udana vayu, samana vayu, mind, intellect, subconscious self, unconscious self and the spirit.

The antahkarana is a collective name for the mind, *manas*, intellect, *buddhi*, memory, *chitta* and the awareness of 'I', *ahamkara*.

Thus we find that our ancient rishis were fully aware of the unconscious and the subconscious dimensions of man.

It is ignorance to give all credit to the modern age for the development of the science of the mind. Many subtle subjects and topics have been discussed in the Upanishads by the rishis and their last findings have been safely deposited in the mantras of the Vedas.

Seat of chidakasha

The chit is undimensional consciousness or awareness of our inner personality. It is a vast treasure house of knowledge of all kinds. It has an all-pervasive record of the past, the present and the future. It is the unending firmament of inward awareness enveloping both the conscious and the unconscious existence of man. The seat of chit may roughly be located as above the eyebrows in the forehead. There is one consciousness which works through the sense organs while we are extrovert, and the same is switched on, when we close the doors of our outer sense organs, by physical and mental efforts. This chit appears to function through the apparatus of the mind and the intellect, but it is beyond their reach. You can experience it only when both the mind and intellect cease to do their normal functions along with the senses.

To have a thorough understanding of the chit is essential, since it is the root cause of all human activities. To locate the chidakasha, you must hold your consciousness somewhere in the cavity of your skull just behind the bones of the forehead. Have a tight and unwavering grip over the point where your consciousness sticks while closing the eyes. And very often this seat is found in the hollow of the forehead's bony cavity. Therefore, while concentrating on chidakasha, the space behind the forehead should serve as a material footing around which to centre your consciousness.

Practice of chidakasha dharana

The practice of chidakasha dharana is now described for your benefit. It runs through five stages.

The first stage consists of your watching the darkness that envelops your chidakasha when you close the eyes. You have to continue to watch it carefully as a witness, seeing some drama unfolding before your mind's eye till the second stage is reached.

In the second stage you see the darkness interspersed by a variety of colours such as red, yellow, golden, blue. It may happen that the darkness may be replaced by a colour like the golden dawn. But your attention must be centred in watching this interplay of colours, neither trying to think or understand or analyze them. Continue doing so for some time. Then go further.

In the third stage, let the consciousness penetrate deeply through the veil of darkness, or the play of colours. Make it deeper. Your concentration is becoming more intense. Here is the basis of mental telepathy. Therefore, you have to be careful. Intensify your concentration, at the same time witness the flight of consciousness in the 'dark night of the soul'. As the practice intensifies you will come across rare experiences. Continue this for some time and then come to the fourth stage.

The fourth stage consists of having an overall survey of the chidakasha, above, below, at the front, back and sides. The consciousness becomes all-pervasive. It behaves as if it is like a person in search of something gazing all around him and knowing what he is doing. So you must survey the chidakasha for some time. At the same time carefully retain the awareness that you are doing so. Then come to the fifth stage.

The fifth stage consists of putting yourself in the centre of chidakasha. Visualize the inner firmament of chidakasha and then try to be in the centre of it. Your awareness becomes more subtle and penetrating by practice.

After this is over, meditate on your ishta deva in chidakasha for a short time and end the practice.

By the practice of chidakasha dharana you can very well experience the existence of chit. For therapeutic value,

preventive and curative measures of physical and mental diseases you have to reach this depth of personality. You have to approach the chit for the fulfilment of your desire. It is very difficult to explain this science of subtle experiences and experiments in expressible and understandable words. I have tried to give only theoretical details as far as this is possible, but your knowledge will be complete only when you sit daily for meditation and after some months practice will begin to comprehend it as well as start experiencing the presence of this abstract astral matter.



The Psychic Land and its Exploration

Occultists, spiritualists, saints, sages, adepts and the scriptures bear testimony to the existence of several other universes which are apart from ours. Supernatural experiences in the daily life of thousands of individuals further assure us that there is some mysterious plane which is beyond the perception of the physical eyes.

Besides these, we see almost daily, many of us passing to the other world through the gateway of death. Do we still need more proof? If so, then better to sit in quietude. Think for a moment that you are going to die in the next moment. Don't be afraid. Closely watch your thoughts. What will happen if you die? How will you feel? You, who are just now alive, full of consciousness, full of bright intellect and wisdom, will you extinguish into nothingness? No, never will you feel that you will not outlive the death of the body. Your consciousness will remain somewhere else and that is the psychic world, the unseen, the invisible world.

This is why we firmly believe that we have not this world alone to live in. There are other worlds also where we live and move in our subtle body, which is comprised of finer elements. This visible world of ours is made up of five gross elements, named as *kshiti*, earth, *jala*, water, *pavaka*, fire, *gagana*, sky and *samira*, air.

The psychic, astral planes are made up of ethereal elements, which have very, fine vibrations, which cannot be

grasped or caught in any way by our present senses, which are used to grasp coarser vibrations in comparison to the vibrations of the *sukshma lokas*, subtle dimensions.

Human energy is like the flow of the river. Like the river, it moves in the direction it flows. Just as a candle removes the darkness where it is lit up, so does the power of the human intellect and energy. If you put this energy to the study and practice of art, you will be known as an artist. If you direct it towards music, you will be known as a musician. If you put it towards scientific research, you will be known as a scientist. When the same energy is employed for the exploration of the unseen world, powers and laws of nature, the research scholar is known as yogi. Yoga is a school of thought, which teaches the technique to transcend the limitations of the body and the mind. One who employs or uses his energy for the study and practice of yoga broadens and improves his vision by elevating the downward trend of his energy to a higher one.

When we check the energy leaking through the sensuous enjoyments of things, which have no permanent value, we feel more strong, energetic and powerful. With this accumulated strength, when one meditates on some object, or tries to know the hidden truth behind the apparent, he succeeds. His vision and power of perception becomes so keen that he can look through the thick covering of the matter.

The psychic world we talk of is very near yet very far, in the sense that it is inaccessible to the common mass. Yet one who is willing to toil and tire will be given or finds the access. The knowledge acquired is to be used for the upliftment of mankind and not for personal benefit.

Perseverance and personal efforts are the prerequisites for the practice. But, when a man acquires supernatural faculties he should not live in the world. This means that he should not entertain the habits, desires and ambitions which worldly people possess. He has to dwell in a state of superconsciousness. He should, at least, attempt to do so

while trying to get the passport. He must not brood over food, fashion, fancies, politics, power and money. There is no harm, but the utmost energy is to be preserved and used for the yoga practices. The aspirant or student willing to explore the land of the invisible must remain single-minded all the while and should carefully keep himself away from the adverse influences, which may do and undo the results achieved thereto.

It is easy to obtain the gate-pass to the ethereal regions, provided you can detach your mind from mundane interests. Unless you cut the string of attachment for worldly objects you cannot attach yourself to the objects of the supernatural world. This is why scriptures and saints advocate *vairagya*, detachment. This can be achieved only if we cut short our emotions and thoughts constantly flowing towards every nonsense, Tom, Dick and Harry, from stone chips to jet planes and sputnik. If we do so, we can gradually develop the faculty of hearing the voice of silence, seeing visions of the unseen, smelling the inodorous and tasting the tasteless things.

The secret behind it is this. There is a vast panorama of life, a vast universe, a big divine store of knowledge and everything even beyond this earth. We are living in that world yet we are not aware. We are perhaps, not conscious of those things, because our whole energy is diverted in acquiring ephemeral things of this world alone. We live for bread, education, power, television, bangles and so many other things. Who cares to labour for the knowledge of the supernatural or the divine? But, those who care even a little to have the knowledge of these supernatural things achieve ample knowledge. These men are known in the history of mankind as saints, seers, yogis and adepts.

The adepts have been careful enough to hand down their art and skill to the successors. This is why this knowledge has been preserved, despite several seeming contradictions.

If you want to know something about the psychic land, first be prepared to take up and pursue some practice regularly. Get up at 2 am. Practise this technique, which is

the preliminary preparation for the beginner, but ultimately will lead you towards the psychic land.

For this purpose you must have one room exclusively for your own use. It is desirable that the atmosphere in this room be kept free from outer influences. Take an old hanging calendar. On the back of the calendar put a black spot of a diameter of $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. Light a candle. Arrange your seat near the wall, either on a chair or on the ground. Hang the calendar on the wall at such a height that, while sitting, the black spot is in front of your eyes. Put a small table on the left of your chair or seat. Burn a candle and put it on the table when you intend to sit for the practice. Sit for the practice daily at 2 am. Fix your gaze on the black spot. Look with full concentration – intent gaze, fixed gaze, relentless gaze. Go on looking at it. In the beginning, if your eyes water and are tired, rest by closing the eyes for ten seconds. Then again start gazing at the spot. While attempting to gaze at the spot you must see the spot alone and nothing else. No side things, not even the white light coming out of the black spot. White light will surround the spot as soon as you start gazing with full concentration. This light will move and you will have temptation to pursue the white light, but you should refrain from doing so. Stick to gazing at the black spot till your mind becomes blank and you see nothing. Not even the black spot, or the surrounding light, nor the whiteness of the calendar paper. No, nothing whatsoever.

At this time, you will also receive many thought currents, which will detract you from your mission and pursuit. You should remain indifferent to these thought waves, and close yourself in. Don't allow the thoughts to enter your mind. Go on looking at the spot until it vanishes and you start seeing some figures, either with eyes closed or eyes open. This practice cuts off the link of the mind with the surrounding world and at once places it at the disposal of subconscious powers, which are directly linked with the psychic land.



Samadhi

Trance, ecstasy, or suspension of consciousness is not samadhi, *samadhi* is sublime equanimity. There are many wrong notions about samadhi. According to some, samadhi is a state where one's body starts to look like a stone, the pulse rate slows down and the metabolic process stops. Suspended animation is the greatest science which has been mastered and perfected by Indian yogis, but this is not samadhi. In the state of suspended animation, or *jada samadhi*, there is no awareness or knowledge. The subconscious or subliminal stock is not exhausted and remains dormant.

If samadhi merely meant a stage of steady posture and total unconsciousness very few spiritual seekers would be successful in attaining it. A person who has been able to make the conscious and subconscious forces dormant is really commendable, but that has nothing to do with yoga and the common man.

If the stage of samadhi does not exhaust the muscular, emotional and other tensions; if it does not bestow peace, power, enlightenment; if it does not remove your complexes, conflicts, schizophrenia and psychological disorders, it is not samadhi.

What is samadhi then? Can every one achieve samadhi? Is samadhi total awareness or complete forgetfulness? In samadhi are we conscious or unconscious? Is samadhi

total suspension, forgetfulness, total inertia, or absolute consciousness or total awareness?

Mind is a bundle of mental patterns of awareness. When every pattern of awareness has been rejected and annihilated, what remains is the ultimate form of consciousness. Here man experiences peace within.

Modern man feels tension in his day-to-day life. The busy mechanical life of towns, the industrial congestion, the family problems form matters for his increased tension, but in fact, this is not tension. Tension is that state when two forces pull each other in two opposite directions, when one wants to do something but some force in him dissuades him from doing so. This is the tension in ego and super-ego, as the psychoanalysts would have it.

There are divine and evil elements in us. The war between the dark and the divine forces in us is the real tension. The psychologist will make you relax by certain methods, but then there is in you an inexhaustible stock of dormant subliminal and unsubliminal tendencies, which are called *anadi vasana*, beginningless desires. The psychologist cannot help you in exhausting this stock. It is here that yoga comes to one's help. It has therapeutic, mental, spiritual, occult and psychic value.

If you wish to remove your tensions, the first step you have to take is to ease and relax yourself. Find out the first, ultimate and original cause, the cause or causes of tension. That tension is the constant struggle between the dark and the divine forces in us, the devil and the God, Rama and Ravana, or Kauravas and Pandavas. By the practice of yoga, the mental, muscular and emotional tensions of a person are removed, and a stage dawns where there is an end to this eternal fight within man, and this is the supreme stage of sublime equanimity. In the second chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, from the fifty-sixth sloka onwards, this subject is dealt with. Arjuna asks Krishna about the state of *sthita-prajna*, a person unmoved by dualities, how he sits, what he eats. Suspended animation has nothing to do with this. Yoga helps

one to make life powerful, to awaken the dormant genius within, to get an insight and to activate the third eye. This is the state of superconsciousness.

In samadhi you are awake inside. Now if you close your eyes, you will feel blankness and darkness, but in the yogic state of samadhi you are awake internally and externally, both. This is, however, not the highest samadhi.

The greatest samadhi is the balance of mind. Not just the balance of consciousness. It is not intellectual balance. Sometimes, when you feel there is no tension in you, the tension has actually passed on from the conscious level to the subconscious or the unconscious.

The greatest tension one feels when one advances in the stage of meditation is in the innermost body. The individual soul is in the wilderness. Rama is in utter grief and sorrow. The ten-headed Ravana, the ten senses have taken away Sita, the peace of Rama, the individual soul. The individual soul comes into being out of sattwa, rajas and tamas. Because of Kaikeyi, Rama goes into exile; because of tamas the individual soul wanders in worldliness. Rama runs after the deer and loses Sita; the individual soul runs after shadow, greed, and so on, and gives up the four factors responsible for peace. Satsang, swadhyaya, sadhana and inner silence are the four factors. Now, the soul wanders in search of peace, even as Rama wandered in search of Sita.

This is the point where real tension starts. You first find pleasure in the world, develop a hankering, a craving, a desire. Then, your first fight is with Kumbhakarna, slothfulness, lethargy and indolence. Next, you have to fight with Meghnada, the unseen forces of the mind, the conflicts in your consciousness. If Hanuman, Lakshman and the monkeys do not help you, you will lose the battle. Rama alone cannot fight. Hanuman is devotion and spiritual, vital strength. Lakshman is the symbol of constant vigilance and mindfulness. You should not do sadhana for a few days and again give it up. The tempo of sadhana must be constant.

However, sometimes even Lakshman may faint. Sometimes one is eclipsed by lethargy and vigilance is relaxed because the senses are very powerful. The fish, the deer, the elephant and the serpent have only one sense active and because of that they lose their life, whereas in man his five senses are strong. What will be the lot of a man if he surrenders before his senses?

Now, when Lakshman faints, Hanuman goes to bring the Sanjeevane plant and he must bring it before sunrise. The individual has to take to spiritual practices in right earnest without any postponement. If you postpone the program of your sadhana it will never come into your life. It is the death of your spiritual personality due to lack of constant vigilance and spiritual alertness. Therefore, *jagate raho*, stay awake, as the watchman daily calls out.

Shankaracharya says, *kama*, *krodha* and *moha* are the three dacoits within the body. Therefore, be ever watchful. Lust, anger and greed are the great dacoits who are hidden in us to loot our divine treasures.

Now, how to get rid of these inner tensions? So long as you do not practise yoga, do not introvert your mind and control your senses, you will not be able to remove your tensions. Senses and mind are indestructible. Without craving, there can be no sense of mental activity. Craving, or desire is the root cause of the war between Rama and Ravana. Rama's arrows destroyed Ravana's heads, but one after another, they went on reviving until Vibhishana suggested Rama to use Agneyastra, which would dry the pot of nectar in Ravana's stomach. So there is no use curbing the senses, and suppressing the mind and sense desires.

What is this pot of nectar? It is attachment. If you want to bring Sita back, if you want the restoration of spiritual peace, nirvana, sublime equanimity or the ultimate eternal peace, you will have to burn or annihilate this attachment and perfect the art of detachment. No liking for pleasant things and no dislike for unpleasant things, but a feeling of vairagya. This is not the physical, mental or intellectual

detachment of Vedantins. The physical, mental or intellectual detachment will not help you much. Spiritual detachment is the real thing. This is what Krishna describes as achievable by the practice of *buddhi yoga*, the practice of wisdom in living.

When the stock of *anadi vasana*, the beginningless emotions and desires, is exhausted, then the state of perfect balance and peace comes. You will be what you are now. You will be conscious of all things as you are conscious now. Samadhi is the state of absolute sense, intelligence and vigilance. You will recognize and know all in samadhi, as you know people now in waking state. You maintain the normal sense of discrimination, but your mental, intellectual, political, social and sexual jaundice, your physical, mental and intra-intellectual crises are over.

The person does not become inactive after samadhi. Rather, he becomes very powerful. Hard work for days together does not tire him.

He need not take sleeping pills and tranquilizers. No incident of tragedy or joy influences him. He remains equibalanced in joy and sorrow, death and birth, loss and gain, insult and praise, name and fame. He is full of indescribable serenity. You must have experienced the serenity of deep sleep. In deep sleep you are in the lap of a blissful experience and nothing disturbs you. The only difference between deep sleep and samadhi is that in sleep you are unconscious while in samadhi you are conscious of everything, yet you are serene, equibalanced and cheerful. Imagine this highest state of bliss, peace and joy.

This is what every individual needs in order to face the storms of his day-to-day life with an equibalanced mind. You must have that strength that you do not get tired even after working for hours together. If you take rest, you must get tired; if you eat, you must die; if you take medicine, you must fall sick. Know the body, its laws and the lawmaker. It is possible to live without eating, sleeping, and so on, but this is possible only after the attainment of samadhi, not before that.

Samadhi has been rightly regarded as a consummation devoutly to be wished for, but we are not to consider samadhi as merely a kriya. We have to attain perennial samadhi and personify it. Ours should be what Kabir called *sahaja samadhi*, effortless and felicitous samadhi. In the state of sahaja samadhi we attain and continue to be with all the sthitaprajna qualities described by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Modern man has developed many scientific superstitions. You have to do away with them. Each and every idea finds currency with us without proper examination. Accept yoga in your daily life. Yoga is a way of life, the culture of tomorrow. It is not necessary that you go to a temple or meditate on your deity, but whatever you perceive, perceive with sublime equanimity.

For your worldly achievements also, you have to take to yoga. Yoga will fulfil your worldly ambitions and quench your spiritual thirst. Whether you wish for good health, for happy marital life, or prosperity, or spiritual enlightenment yoga will help you. The starting point of yoga is *satsang*, company of holy people or good books. Its culmination is in samadhi. You will always remain restless if you do not practise yoga. There will be something wrong with your inner personality. The first and last, and the only remedy for the removal of emotional, muscular and mental tensions is the practice of yoga. It is then and then alone that you will be free from all tensions and reach a stage where you will exclaim with joy and ecstasy, "I am happy, I am happy, I am happy."



Self-Awareness: Atmanubhuti Yoga

Self-awareness is to be evolved in stages. Through this process you will ultimately realize the existence of a power within. During the yogic practices of japa and meditation you can develop it. After proper development, self-awareness becomes a fact and an experience.

Before I teach you the practice of self-awareness, let me state a few important points. Remember the words body consciousness, pranic consciousness, mental consciousness, astral consciousness, causal consciousness and disembodied consciousness. Remember these six phases of consciousness.

When you sit in a posture, the first consciousness is called body consciousness. Then you slowly breathe in and out. After some time you will feel that the bodily consciousness is diminishing and you are becoming more conscious of the ingoing and the outgoing breath. This happens proportionately. You become all the more aware of the flow of prana. As a result of this, after some time, pranic consciousness becomes predominant and body consciousness is extinct. At that stage you will feel that you are just breathing, breathing and only breathing. When you are aware of breath consciousness, that is pranic consciousness, and when it becomes predominant then it is called bodily unconsciousness. You become unconscious of your body.

Now, to that pranic consciousness add the mantra *Soham* and become conscious of *Soham*, then you feel *So* with ingoing and *Ham* with outgoing breaths. After some time you will become unaware of the two streams of breaths. Simple *Soham* will remain in your awareness. When this becomes intense you will have visions.

As you see visions, mental consciousness begins to fuse into astral awareness. At this stage all forms of *ajapa* will be consumed by an overgrowing astral consciousness. You will land in a plane which is beyond the mental plane. Here the suspension of individual consciousness will take place, as a result of which the aspirant will enter into deep slumber and become unaware even of the process. Those who practise this *kriya* in *shavasana* will revive awareness only in the morning, but those practising in *padmasana* will revive awareness from time to time.

Every *sadhaka* can experience and reach up to the state of astral consciousness by dint of simple guidance and *sadhana*, but when the self goes to the unconscious, the aspirant will have different experiences. He will then experience cyclic movements, slumber, visions, dreams, again slumber and so on. Here he moves between astral and causal spheres of the self. Beyond this no one can go all alone. This is the phase of complete darkness, where you are not aware of anything like time and space. There is absolute suspension of every activity of the mind. There is no functioning of the will there. As a result of that, the aspirant returns to the realm of visions, then gradually or suddenly back to the mental, pranic and bodily consciousness. In yogic language, we call it coming and going, or taking birth again and again, which really means revival of consciousness.

If you want to go beyond this phase of consciousness, the instructor alone is not sufficient. Guide, books or *satsang* will not help you. Here a guru is essential who can create light from darkness. *Guru* is the dispeller of darkness, which is pervading *chidakasha*. He is the one who takes you through the chamber of unconsciousness which in yoga is the fifth

chamber and no aspirant can pierce through it. For no sooner he enters it, he becomes totally unconscious of himself. There is no trace in him of willpower. Therefore, in the fifth chamber, he needs someone to carry him through. When the aspirant sleeps in the fifth chamber of meditation, he does not hear with ears, but follows his guru's instructions. The guru's commands are received in ajna chakra. None, except those whose ajna chakra has begun developing, can listen to the guru's commands. This is the generalized method:

Meditate on the body and transcend the body.

Meditate on the prana and transcend the prana.

Meditate on the mind and transcend the mind.

Meditate on the visions and transcend them.

After this is done, those who wish to do away with the guru should meditate on the unconscious self and transcend that also. However, this method is not so simple. It is easy to have a guru, although he is a rare commodity, but it is difficult to transcend this dark chamber merely by concentration and mindfulness alone.

Technique

Stretch your legs and relax, but with full consciousness. You should be aware of your entire body. Just be sure that you are mindful of the body. Just entertain a simple thought, "I am thinking of my body". Your mind should think only of that word in unbroken awareness. There should be a continuous awareness of the body idea.

If you listen to any sound, like that of a radio and car, form an indifferent attitude. Do not sit for meditation with a vow that you will not be disturbed. If you create any mental attitude, external factors will disturb you very much. Once you step into the field of mental consciousness nothing can disturb you.

When you practise this body idea you will experience the first stage of sleep, but hold on to your consciousness along the border line between the body and the

mind. When you meditate you will distinctly see the demarcating line. You can hold onto the consciousness on the border line.

If you meditate on the body and hold onto the border line, you will experience the phases of pranic, mental and astral consciousness. Then you will go on to the unconscious. If you cannot somehow hold onto the body consciousness, you will surely go into unconsciousness, but there will be no visions. Therefore, continue your awareness without break. We do not want broken consciousness. We want absolute, unceasing and homogeneous consciousness.

You can practise the kriya with eyes open or closed, but better with closed eyes. If you want to do it with open eyes then do it over a dot in unmani mudra.

If you do it in any asana, you will have to visualize the body. Please do not go into details. Do not say, padmasana, siddhasana, and so on. Do not say, "I am erect, I am fat," and so on. Simply say, "I am." While you practise, if you feel drowsy, awaken a great willpower in you and say mentally, "I am." In that stage only the body idea will diminish. You will not be totally unconscious of the body, but the self-consciousness of the body will be evaporating. This is bodiless consciousness. There is consciousness of "I am," but there is no body consciousness at all.

When you sleep, you feel that sleep is coming to you, but you do not think of the body, although you have the body. This is almost the same experience. Please understand this very well. Otherwise you will have two difficulties. You will revive the body idea and you will sleep also. You have to be very careful. It is as if you are walking on a tight rope.

If you go inside, either you sleep, or revert back to the body idea and become aware of the body. Therefore, pure awareness of "I am" without any form, motion, attribute and categorization should prevail.

This *Aham Asmi*, “I am”, changes into *Aham Brahmasmi*, “I am Brahman.” First you become aware of yourself. When you become steady in this practice, later on you become aware of the supreme consciousness. This is realization and not mere intellectual conception. In the sixth chamber the embodied consciousness is to be transcended.

Hari Om Tat Sat



People have different names for this experience. Devotees call it God-experience. Raja yogis call it samadhi, Buddhists nirvana, yet others emancipation or salvation. Vedantins call it atmanubhuti, self experience.

The experience of atmanubhuti is completely independent of every possible item of human existence. It is the same in all, not different. In order to obtain that knowledge, you have to restructure, not only your brain, philosophy, interactions, your love and hate and your life as a whole. The quality of your subjective awareness must be changed. The quality of your objective awareness must be changed. The gap and conflict between internal and external awareness must be reduced.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Spiritual Diary

I will tell you a method of correcting your habits, re-modelling your behaviour and cultivating more virtues. This is the method of writing the spiritual diary.

Let me explain here the method of maintaining it. In the beginning it is a mechanical and slow process. You are not supposed to analyze yourself for self-analysis can create complex in the mind of a beginner and there is every possibility of his becoming abnormal. Therefore, I do not advise spiritual aspirants to approach psychoanalysts. They may give you a way to know yourself, but this in itself causes abnormality.

How to make a spiritual diary? Take a foolscap paper and draw as many as thirty perpendicular lines and make it like a sheet of a roll-call register. These are a few items which need some explanation.

“When did you get up in the morning?” In this column you should write down the time of rising from bed. Here, the purpose is not to compel you to rise earlier by launching a fight against your habits, but to refashion the underground structure of habits itself. You should just write down the time when you leave your bed and take out a monthly average of the time of rising.

Another column is, “How many hours did you sleep?” People are confused at this question because they are unable to decide minimum and maximum hours of sleep. We need

as much sleep as is needed for proper decarbonization in the system, which may differ from individual to individual. Six hours for intellectuals, eight hours for manual labourers, four hours for sadhakas of yoga and ajapa. He who has attained samadhi does not sleep at all; he does not even need it. Those who sleep in excess must be having accumulated toxins in the system. If not, then there might be psychological suppressions or deeply engrained tensions, maybe due to failures in their career. So long as a person is normal, I am sure he cannot oversleep. He who takes to excess sleeping has something wrong somewhere in him. You can minimize the hours of sleep by taking recourse to sattwic diet, asanas, ajapa japa and meditation.

Then there is an item regarding asanas. Practise asanas for fifteen minutes daily. You can select a few asanas for yourself or have them selected by your guru. Regarding pranayama, the only point to be noted is the duration, which is from five to fifteen minutes.

“How long ajapa?” Some practise meditation, some do *namasmarana*, remembrance by repetition of the Lord’s name, and others say prayers. Let the aspirant attend to this item according to his daily practice.

“How many malas of japa?” This is an important item. Take a resolve that you will do a certain number of malas daily. Resolve for a minimum and maximum number, according to your convenience. Over enthusiasm is no good. Japa should be done on the guru mantra and not from a book, as many aspirants do.

The mind deceives. It will suggest, “What is the use of doing japa; all this is mechanical, it is just hypocrisy.” Then this devil mind quotes Kabir, Nanak and other saints. Therefore, one has to resolve positively and stick to those resolves. One mala of *Om Namah Shivaya* mantra is finished in two minutes. It takes about twenty minutes for the Mahamrityunjaya mantra, while the mantra of *Om* takes one minute. Therefore, according to your capacity and circumstances, make a sensible resolve and stick to it at any cost.

Do more japa on holy days like Ramanavami, Gokul-ashtami, Good Friday, Christmas and such other holidays. Pass your birthday, marriage anniversary and such other memorable days in japa, prayers, self-checking and self-auditing instead of wasting money and time.

There are positive as well as negative resolves. For one negative resolve you should make a corresponding positive resolve. Otherwise, the negative resolves will cause unwanted complexes. If you make a resolve that you will not visit the pictures on sacred days, you should also make a corresponding resolve that you will pass such days in sacred kriyas.

Make as many resolves as possible. There is no use saying that resolves should be made according to one's capacity or practice. Nor is it absolutely necessary that one should be after fulfilling every resolve at any cost. One does not become perfect on the very day he makes resolves. This bitter, but actual fact should not be forgotten at any time. Failure in resolves is no failure in life. Rather failure in making resolves is irreparable failure in life.

You will have to note down all the difficulties and complexes you face and preserve such notes in the pooja room. Whenever you are restless and depressed, you should go to the pooja room, meditate for a while and look at your resolves. You will get peace of mind.

In the resolve you should write that you will do minimum twenty and maximum seventy-five malas of *Om Namah Shivaya* or any other mantra. If you miss to act according to your resolve, it only means that you lack sufficient willpower.

"How long did you do karma yoga?" Whatever work you have to do at home or in the office, write the total hours of work. What is the difference between karma and karma yoga? If you do every act mindfully and consciously that becomes karma yoga. It is karma when you do it mechanically. You do many actions in your life mechanically. You just do them, but a raja yogi is aware that he is doing a

particular action. This is karma yoga. His actions are called karma who does not have mindfulness.

By this practice you will know the technique of detachment. You will not be affected by alien influences. I know that detachment is very nice, because by its practice we complete the work and feel peaceful. This is the only way of handling the intricate detachment. Every word, action, thought, breath should be accompanied by perfect awareness. If you practise awareness, the art of detachment will be available to you in no time; success and failure, pain and pleasure, defeat and victory, all these and others will leave no trace in the mind.

“How many times did you get angry and what was your self punishment?” If anyhow you get angry, you must punish yourself. As a token of self-punishment, the dearest thing must be given up. If you do not punish yourself for undesirable actions every time, you can impose cumulative punishment for a month’s negligent acts. There is no benefit in getting angry. For this act of indiscrimination and foolishness, you must punish yourself. You must beg pardon and resolve that you are definitely going to correct yourself. You have to decide for yourself the form of self-punishment.

“Which good quality are you trying to cultivate?” First of all, resolve to cultivate one good quality, but that should not be a difficult one. For instance, you can resolve to speak less and avoid irrelevant, useless, sensational and futile talks. Then, month by month, you can go on with one virtue to be cultivated.

“Which bad quality are you trying to eradicate?” Do not take up a difficult one. Take for example, “I shall not speak harsh words.”

Selfless service purifies the soul. It is because of selfishness that the entire personality is lost in darkness. If we practise selfless service, life will grow in happiness and the mind will become strong and powerful.

Something should be said about satsang because satsang plays the first role in making one’s life and

personality. There is nothing as powerful as satsang in changing thoughts, moods, sentiments and the actions of an individual. If you have any mind to change the broken and disorganized patterns of your life, please go through a course of satsang for some time. Reading of sacred texts, dwelling on pious thoughts and thoughts about the atman, company of saints, hearing of devotional songs and divine stories are various forms of satsang. Satsang is the surest cure for the disease of loneliness. Even in the midst of thousands of people, there are people who feel lonely. To relieve your loneliness you may play badminton, mix in society and do similar things, but this is not the ultimate remedy. That is self-hypnotism. There is every possibility of self-deception and self-hypnotism. So, sit alone and think of God. Make Him your best friend and talk to Him mentally.

You can add your own new items. Write the diary every month and compare it with the earlier entries. After some time, by the grace of God, you will give up bad things and holiness, peace and happiness will be experienced by you.



Form of Spiritual Diary for Self-Elevation

For the month of

No	Question	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	When did you leave the bed?						
2	How many hours did you sleep?						
3	How long did you practice asanas?						
4	How long did you practice pranayama?						
5	How long long did you do pooja, prayer, or dhyana?						
6	How many malas of japa did you do?						
7	How long were you in satsang?						
8	How many times were you angry?						
9	What was your self-punishment?						
10	What virtues are you cultivating?						
11	What bad qualities are you eradicating?						
12	Did you observe salt free diet/fasting?						
13	Did you perform selfless service?						
14	How many hours of karma yoga did you do?						
15	How much likhit japa did you do?						
16	How much charity did you do?						
17	How long did you study scriptures?						
18	When did you go to bed?						

Crystal Gazing

To those who seek pleasures, the world provides many allurements and they remain engrossed in them, but I have learnt from my guru, Swami Sivananda, and also experienced that the greatest joy lies in sadhana. Sadhana is itself a sort of research. In sadhana one can experiment upon and know the subtle spiritual laws. Black magic, *preta vidya*, tantra vidya have been current in India for a long time. Even now in the Himalayas, by the association of some, or the grace of God, one is able to have the sight of saints who possess transcendental knowledge and powers. This knowledge is not to be found among ordinary men. This, however, does not prove that such sciences do not exist. Swami Vishuddhananda is well known for this. Everyone knows about the Trailing Swami. Dr Gopikrishna of Varanasi has come across many such saints. The monthly *Kalyan* publishes such experiences.

There are several sadhanas current under the name of 'secret science'. This being imparted by a qualified guru to a properly equipped pupil. This is not an impossible thing. Those who know these sadhanas and have experienced its results never reveal them. It is not possible to assign any reason for this secrecy, except that its publicity leads to no benefit, but on the contrary, does some harm. An average man regards it as fun, and its acquisition and exhibition leads to a waste of spiritual force. This neither helps the people,

nor the sadhakas. As soon as it becomes a professional matter people lose faith in it. Still, these sciences can be experimented upon. In the *Yoga Sutras* of Sage Patanjali, several siddhis and the methods of acquiring them have been discussed. The practice of each kriya is indicated in one sutra, but its practice requires a lot of time and energy.

In some places it is the practice for people to go to some pandit, astrologer, or wise man in the town to know about the past and future events. People go to such a man in cases where someone has lost a child, when some property is stolen, or someone is ill or settled in a far away place. Such a person is known as the guni. The term *guni* referred to a person who had some knowledge of this science or of yoga. One who had acquired a special kind of power was called a guni. It has been found that at some time people used to break eggs to know about the past and the future, or to know about them by means of using sparrows as the media. Linseed was also used for such a purpose. This practice is more current in villages. It is not because the villagers are totally stupid. It is because ancient sciences are, to an extent, preserved in such places.

What is the secret of this? What is that science which finds out about the truth of past or future events? There exists a pandit in Varanasi who used to reveal such things and about eighty-five percent of his forecasts were found to be true.

I remember an incident in my childhood. The incident has special reference to the sadhana which I propose to show here. Once some article was stolen and the pandit called me. He placed a spot of ink on the nail of my thumb and asked me to gaze at it. I was allowed to gaze at it for a long time. After that he asked me several questions. What did I see? Did I see any figure? What was the figure like and what did it do? I do not remember the replies I made, but I remember that I saw one person standing. I would not have remembered even this incident if the swami had not asked me once in Varanasi to gaze upon a new and shining incense burner. He asked me to do trataka on that article for long and to reveal whatever I

saw. He then revealed that it was the *anjanam vidya*, unknown knowledge.

In the *Yoga Darshana*, Maharshi Patanjali said that through the practice of concentration of the mind one acquires knowledge of certain things. In the *Yoga Sutras*, *samyama* means meditation or one-pointedness. When one is asked to do samyama on some object the meaning is that one should keep the object as a medium and reach the state of perfect concentration. The process of meditation, the meditating self and the object of meditation, these three combine and merge into one. It is then called meditation. Perfect concentration is attained only when the three, the meditating self, the process of meditation and the object of meditation merge into each other. Perfection of concentration is *dhyana*, or meditation.

The form of truth is revealed in the stage of perfect concentration. All knowledge resides within the individual, but it does not come up to the brain because the external objects exercise so great an influence over us that they cover the things within us and we are not able to perceive them. The mind of man, through all the hours of day and night, revolves around the objects of the world, with or without reason. Day in and day out man schemes to secure these material things. Thus, as long as the mind is extrovert, how could it be introvert? Since childhood our mind is used to being extrovert. It thus acquires bad habits and is not willing to think of things other than the worldly, and is not able to do so even if it tries to.

With such an extrovert mind it is not possible to acquire knowledge. That is why certain sadhanas are indicated. Sadhana is an instrument for awakening the soul force. Eternal objects are also used as an aid to awaken this power. Knowledge acquired in the material world also becomes the instrument for this purpose. In order to acquire the power of concentration one has to take a material object also. Moreover, the soul force is revealed through language, music, activities, and so on.

Sadhana is the means to resolve the difficulties which stand in the way of acquiring right knowledge or power. Sadhana is just the thing which removes hindrances in the expression of that supreme light which exists in each one of us. Thus the mantras, magic and miraculous, or yogic powers can only be the several levels of soul power, or self-knowledge. To know all these one can adopt the practice of any sadhana. For this purpose one has to master the practice of samyama. Crystal gazing is one of these sadhanas, which is easy. Through this sadhana one can be a *guni* and predict past and future events. Of course, to attain perfection in this sadhana is difficult. Vishuddhanandji practised it for twelve years in acquiring *gandha siddhi*, siddhi over smell, and Afjal Khan took twenty years to perfect the science of spirit control.

Practice

Crystal is found in old rocks. It is the essence of the rocks. Just as in a coal mine coal is found, so also in mountains and rocks crystal is found. It is a transparent stone, more transparent than water and clearer. Objects are seen as clearly through it as through a mirror. It is also called *sphatik mani*. In very old mountains they form in a round circular shape. Shivalinga is made also of this sphatik stone. This stone is not easily available today, but if a sadhaka happens to get it, it should be used for sadhana. A metal stand should be made to keep the sphatik.

The crystal stone should be kept in the pooja chamber. It should be worshipped as a shivalinga with devotion and concentration. It should be bathed with pure water and cleansed with a clean piece of cloth. Thereafter one should gaze at it steadily without a flicker of eyelids. The eyes should be steady. To begin with, this should be done for five minutes first and extended to half an hour later. Continue gazing steadily at some point in the crystal in such a way that you do not see anything except the crystal. This practice should be continued for a month or more.

The second stage will follow after a few days. In this stage you should gaze at the crystal, but without the consciousness that you are doing so. It is a stage similar to that in which, at the time of sleep, the consciousness of seeing does not remain. However, there is a lot of difference between the stage of sleep and this practice. In this practice your eyeballs are extremely steady and the eyelids do not flicker or fall. Try to imagine sleeping with eyes open, but the sight must be fixed on the crystal. It should not wander. The mind should be steady and quiet like the rock and the ocean. You will have to exert yourself to practise this daily. It is easy to learn, but difficult to practise.

In the third stage, while continuing the *trataka*, think as if you are going within yourself. Take out the mind from the act of seeing. The eyes may remain open, they may gaze at the crystal, but the mind must go inside. When the mind becomes introvert there should be no thought or any desire. The mind must solely be dissociated from the external objects. It is possible that in such a stage one may see dreams and may feel like going to sleep. The desire to sleep, sometimes becomes so strong that the *sadhaka* really feels lazy and wants to sleep. At this critical time the mind readily deceives. It brings such thoughts at that time that it advises you to go out to the lower levels of grossness, but in spite of that you should continue the *trataka*. In this state, with open eyes you may see dreams. The *sadhaka* sees forms in the crystal. These forms appear to be moving and talking actively. It is just what one experiences in dreams and which has no relation to the waking state.

When you see forms in the crystal even while gazing at it, you should gaze as if you are looking for, or searching something. Just as when you are observing something critically your mind is attuned to it, so also at this time you should create such an attitude of the mind. The look must be a searching look. If anything is seen the mind should observe it steadily and critically. By a little mental effort you will be able to see in details every form. Try to make it mentally

clear: What does the form of the person observed look like? Who can he be? What is indicated on his features and what does he intend saying or doing? What has he in his hands, with whom is he talking? What does he talk? Practise daily. This first course of trataka is prescribed for six months. Yama, niyama and vairagya are the keys to success in sadhana.



Psychic Sleep

There is one simple and useful kriya which the yogis know. If that kriya is explained to people in general, with certain modifications, it will produce infinitely beneficial effects. This is the art of sleeping. It may be called psychic sleep.

People do not actually know how to sleep. Often they go to sleep while thinking or reading. During the act of thinking, they do not know when sleep comes. To go to sleep with a mind entangled in thoughts is not beneficial to health and mind. It is not proper to have sleep with a mind full of anxiety and disturbances. In that case, it does not provide full rest to the body. Tiredness is not cast off completely. One has bad dreams, digestion is not perfect and on the following morning one does not feel energetic and pleasant. To sleep that way is unhealthy and unscientific.

You may have doubts as to what particular thing there can possibly be in the act of sleeping which needs to be learnt. Sleep comes to everybody. It is quite natural for everybody to have sleep. There is nothing particular, of course, to be learnt, but you will see and realize that sleep is an important activity in our life. The effect of sleep influences our mind, activities, nature, character and intelligence.

Let us take an example. If you make it a routine of getting up early at 4 am and give it a strictly practical shape in your everyday life, you will find that there will be a thorough change in your life. Its effect will be on all matters connected

with your living. Firstly, you will feel invigorated, strong and refreshed. If you have been complaining of want of time, you will now find that the day is too long and you have not so much of work. Not for a day or two only, but if you make this a lifelong routine, in that case you will feel so. You will always have perfect health. You will not have a feeling of exhaustion after any hard work. There will never be a complaint about sleeplessness or insomnia. The mind will always remain cheerful and peaceful. You will be endowed with magnificent success in all activities of life.

However, the condition is that you must be thoroughly strict in following this routine. Then only you will see the result. This and only this one routine will be able to awaken all the potentialities latent in you. You will be the master of extraordinary willpower. This is one of the simple rules of the science of sleep.

Everybody takes sleep to be just a simple and natural affair without any importance, but it will not be an exaggeration to say that no worldly man knows the scientific way of sleeping. No householder knows how to sleep. Householders have to work hard. If they learn the process of psychic sleep, they particularly, will have extraordinary benefits. They will complete their sleep and derive maximum advantage with minimum hours of sleep.

Mostly, people experience a feeling of tiredness in the body and heaviness in the head after leaving the bed in the morning. Some people experience feelings of lethargy when they wake up. They do not feel like getting out of bed and they keep on dozing in a half asleep or half awake state. There are many who sleep for eight long hours, or even more, but they do not feel like having completed their sleep. For an average healthy person, eight hours of sleep is not only quite sufficient, but is rather more than the actual requirement. Many people do not get sleep unless they take either Bromide or other tranquilizers. Thus, we see that while many people suffer from excessive sleep, there are quite a large number of those who do not sleep at all. Many people do not get sleep unless

they read a book or novel. This is very bad for their health. By reading in a lying posture the eyes are subjected to undue pressure, with the result that they get tired and exhausted due to excessive strain, and sleep comes with this induced lethargy in the organs. This is a bad way of going to sleep.

There are people who do not sleep without having a massage of their limbs. This habit is not only bad, but it is dangerous to those who are rheumatic. If this facility is not available when the person is away from home, or even when he is at home, he does not sleep. These are all drawbacks and we should take them to be ailments of sleep. Sleep should be natural and should come in a proper and natural way.

There is one more problem. A person of the present age is tremendously busy. In the modern industrial and material world, the average person keeps running after high aims and desires. We have a glimpse of people with a busy life more in the large cities. There are some people who are so busy in multifarious activities that they do not have time even to sleep properly or take proper rest. This is a great problem for them. Businessmen, doctors, social workers, government or other officers have some difficulties.

There is one golden rule which can be prescribed for all such people. They can complete their requirements of sleep by lying in bed only for three hours and, with this short interval of sleep, they can shrug off their exhaustion caused by twenty-one hours of hard work. Napoleon is said to be one of those who slept the minimum. It is said that he had to keep on horseback for days together and he completed his sleep even on the saddle. Gandhiji was also one of those who slept little. His hard and continuous brain work is known to all. What were the reasons for their success? They were yogis in a true sense. They had full concentration of mind. They were busy after fulfilling their goals with deep concentration. Concentration has tremendous powers. It is said that yogis never sleep. They always keep their mind towards their goal with undiverted attention, like the sunflower. A yogi transforms his sleep into samadhi.

Just as the body takes rest while sleeping, the mind should also have similar rest. Even at night, running of the mind does not cease. When we go to sleep with multifarious thoughts, some thoughts involving passion, anger, greed, pride, attachment and all sorts of things appear in different shapes and forms. When the mind wanders about here and there, one does not have good sleep and is engrossed in horrible dreams. The mind is not peaceful and there is no feeling of being refreshed. Dirty thoughts, based on fictitious events, appear even at the dead of night and cause the soul to wander and be tired. These undesirable thoughts of man need to be diverted. If the mind is taken off from all these feelings and is turned towards one particular direction, one can have peace and pleasure of mind. This we shall explain later.

Sleep is a lower stage of samadhi. While sleeping man forgets all worldly troubles, anxieties, tiresome feelings and travels into another world. He has no idea of this *loka*, dimension. No amount of abuse will affect or enrage him. Also, in samadhi man is away from all the feelings and sensations relating to this world or loka. The organs also do not communicate any feeling, but there is a difference between sleep and samadhi. In sleep, one neither has knowledge of, nor power to control one's own self. In samadhi, although the organs do not communicate ideas connected with this world, one is quite within one's soul and has full knowledge of everything. However, that is a very high stage, rather the highest, when atman is in a stage of complete knowledge and infinite light. Then this world appears to be completely dark.

Although this kriya is quite simple and natural, its real technique is not known to everybody.

Generally, some people suffer from sleeplessness in varying degrees and others suffer from excessive sleep. If we think over this with a cool and pure mind, we realize how many long and precious hours we lose and spoil by sleeping uselessly. If we had used this costly time in doing some important work, we would have achieved marvellous results.

In a nutshell, if we sleep just for the necessary hours and use the rest of our time in constructive work relating to our life, or that of others, we can attain a high position in society. The time we spend in useless sleep can better be used for study, earning money, in service of people or in sadhana for attaining self-realization.

When just a little sleep can suffice, there is no necessity of having long sleep. It is necessary for all of us to know something about the science of sleep. What should be the quality of sleep? For how many hours should we sleep? How to sleep? How to get rid of our feeling of tiredness quickly? How are mental tensions to be diverted? How should tiredness of the body and mind be removed in a minimum of time? What sort of sleep will bring us freshness and energy? Practical processes relating to sleep will be explained here, along with a few necessary rules for efficient sleeping.

Too much sleep indicates tamoguna and sleeplessness is the result of mental tensions. Both are undesirable. It is good to avoid sleeping carelessly and with diffused thoughts. As all daily duties are properly attended to and are given due importance, similarly the act of sleeping should be treated in the same way. The mind should be given this training. A machine which works throughout the whole day without interruption gets heated. Sleep is a cooling device. It recharges the battery of our body which gets discharged while functioning during daytime. Energy that we spend through toils during the day is recouped. Before lying for sleep, at first sit for a while on the bed calmly and quietly, say for two to four minutes. Shake off all your thoughts concerning the activities of the day. A simple way of doing this is to start mental japa of ishta mantra. Any disturbing thoughts of the day will automatically go away. Then meditate on your ishta for sometime and lie down in bed in this state.

Lie flat on the bed with the face upwards and keep the feet a little apart. Both the hands should be kept by your side with palms upwards. The head should be kept on a pillow which should not be unduly high. Now go on relaxing all the

limbs one by one. Start from the feet, then hands and go on up to the head. While relaxing, keep your mind fixed on a particular limb and try to feel relaxed and comfortable so far as the function of that part of the body is concerned. If you like, every other part of the limb can be relaxed separately. For example, one toe and then the other toes, the feet, heels, knee joints, thighs, all parts should be respectively treated. Try to fix your mind on these parts one after another in order and feel as if that particular part is being relaxed and is receiving perfect rest. This will make all limbs, in fact, every part of the body light and their tensions will be reduced.

After relaxing the feet and its toes separately in this way, the hands should be treated likewise. Both hands can be relaxed at a time, or separately, as you like. Either the whole hand is relaxed at a time, or all the sub parts separately, which of course is a better way of relaxation. All the five fingers of the right hand one after the other, all the finger joints, then the palm, wrist, hand, elbow, arm should be treated, and similarly respective parts of the left hand. After that come to the abdomen, waist, chest, back and shoulders. Then relax the neck and then come to the face. Here again, chin, cheeks, lower lip, nostrils, nose, eyes, eyelids, eyebrows, ears and head should be respectively treated and relaxed.

After relaxation of each part of the limb, the whole of the limb should be relaxed at one time. All parts from the waist downwards should be relaxed first and then further down to the feet.

In the end, relaxation is to be done to all parts of the body simultaneously from the head to the feet. Feel that your whole body has become completely lifeless and you are only looking at it. It can be confidently said that this full kriya, i.e. the process or act of relaxation can hardly be completed by and by. Generally people fall fast asleep before completing even a quarter of the kriya, or at best half of it. If sleep comes when the whole act is completed, it is exceedingly beneficial. We should be sleeping when the last part of this act is done, i.e. after completing this kriya in full. Even if sleep comes

before completion of this full kriya, there is nothing wrong. It will still prove quite efficacious. This kriya can be practised in two ways:

1. By relaxing all limbs together
2. By relaxing each and every part of the limbs treating them separately.

Briefly speaking, you have to do it like this. At first, one leg, then the other, then one hand and then the other, lips, abdomen, chest, back, both shoulders simultaneously, neck and face should be respectively treated and relaxed.

The next kriya can be best performed by treating all the right hand parts first and then the left. Starting from the right toe, we should go up to the head relaxing all intermediate parts and then from the head to the foot downwards to the left toe. No part of the body, however small, should be left. If you happen to have forgotten the knee, you should not look back at the knee and start from there again. This is wrong. If any limb is left behind in the beginning, there is no harm. Go on practising this kriya and you will remember all the limbs in successive order by practice, and then you will be doing it in a most natural way.

This kriya can be done even in the daytime. In the midst of hard work during the day, if we have an opportunity or interval or recess, we should rest by doing this kriya. All sub-processes of this whole kriya can be adjusted according to the time available. If the time available is very short, this kriya should also be small in duration. If there is enough time, every part of the limb should be given sufficient time. One thing is most important to take care of. If you do this kriya in the daytime, it is not meant to induce sleep. You should keep alert that sleep does not come, because this kriya readily induces sleep.

There is one more peculiarity in this kriya. If you have a thought beforehand of the duration of sleep, you will get a mild jolt at that particular time and you will be awoken. These facts, as explained above, are quite real and are based on practical experience. These are yogic kriyas, not based on fiction.

A few things more are to be learnt. Excessively busy people, who do not have even ten to fifteen minutes for rest during the daytime, can do this kriya even while seated in the chair and being amidst files.

Do this kriya even while sitting in a chair in the office for two to five minutes, and your feeling of tiredness and exhaustion will go. All bodily and mental tensions will be off. All the consumed energy of the body will be recouped to a great extent. Those who have to do too much of brain work will be well advised to do this kriya twice or thrice for even two minutes during the daytime.

There are certain people in our society who have to keep standing while on duty and they do not have time to sit for a while as, for example, engine drivers, lecturers. It can be emphatically said that this kriya is also for them. It can be done even while standing. It should be done like this. Stand at ease with your feet apart, 1 ½ to 2 inches, but quite firm on the ground. The hands should be clasping each other either on the back or on the chest. Keep yourself quite stationary and fixed at one place, but quite at ease. Close your eyes and relax by doing this kriya in a short interval. There is no need of rotating mental consciousness in the limbs at the end of this kriya. Only bring in a blank state. To stand by a wall would be better.

There are many other ways of doing this kriya of relaxation. Any one of them should be selected according to one's own liking.

Lie flat on the bed. Relax the whole body at a time. Feel that your body is lying on the bed and that you are quite separate from it. Feel that you are looking at your body, which is sleeping only. Leave your body completely loose and relaxed for about five minutes, and after that start counting one, two, three, four and so on. Go on counting along with your breath and let it continue as long as it can.

If your health is normal, you will not be able to count more than one hundred or one hundred and fifty. To fall into sleep like this, while relaxing, is very good.

There is another method of relaxation. Do this kriya of relaxation by any method you like. After that, in place of counting, concentrate your mind on *bhrumadhyā*, the centre in between your eyes, and start mental japa of *Om* or *Soham*. Go on doing this so long as you are awake.

By doing mental japa and concentrating the mind on *bhrumadhyā*, we get deep sleep and all the benefits as described above. What is required is that you should select one method according to your own choice and practise it continuously for some days or months.

There is yet another method for practising this. After doing relaxation of body for a few minutes, bring your mind to the breath. Look mentally at the breath only. Add *Om* or *Soham* to the breath. While breathing in, chant mentally the mantra *Om* or *Soham* and repeat this mantra while breathing out. With every breath, in or out, go on chanting *Om* or *Soham* mentally.

Japa can also be done in four mantras, i.e. *chaturtha pranayama*. This mantra should be chanted four times with every breath, both in and out separately. By doing japa in this way, the mind is fully concentrated and we get sleep soon.

Now select one of these methods and practise it regularly every day. By these kriyas, the *sadhaka* can enter into a deeper world with certain alterations in these kriyas. *Sadhanas* on *vijnanamaya kosha* and *anandamaya kosha* are also practised. You can learn these *sadhanas* from a guru himself. These deeper and finer kriyas can never be understood without the blessings of a guru, what to speak of its practice and *sadhana*.



Objectives of Meditation

Meditation is a way to self-realization, but if you sit down for it you will find it most difficult. Many problems will come forward. How to meditate may be your first problem. Thousands are quite ignorant of the techniques of meditation. It is not easy at all to forget the body consciousness and to force the mind to dwell for long on one desired object. Then mastery over the mind cannot be achieved in one day. No school can give you a certificate of qualification on the very first day of admission. It takes a long time to score something on the ground of meditation.

The *Bhagavad Gita* discloses that *abhyasa*, practice, and *vairagya*, detachment, are the two necessary conditions for the achievement of success in meditation. Before entering into a serious discussion on this topic an aspirant must have a very clear idea of the objectives of meditation. Meditation is a vague term not giving a clear idea of its program to an aspiring individual ready to make the start.

Objectives

In its first place, meditation is an exercise of mental discipline. It disciplines and directs the mind towards a desired end. Whereas yama and niyama of the eightfold path of raja yoga are objective approaches to disciplining the mind, meditation is the subjective one.

Second, it is a way to control the vagaries of the mind. People suffering from inner conflicts of divergent emotions, worry, anxiety, indecisiveness and the like greatly benefit by the practice of meditation.

Third, it gives a chance for introspection and clears the maladies of the inner self. A man of the twentieth century remains extrovert the whole day. He finds little time to look within, which is most essential. Even as the busiest man of the world has to find time to nurse his physical body, in the same manner, your inner self also requires a few minutes of attention daily. If the physical body needs evacuation, wash, refill and garments, will not your mental body need something of an abstract nature? Your mind, without a moment's rest, is facing the stress and strain of life. It, therefore, needs tending most. Even machines are put to rest after certain hours of work, but would you name a single technique you use to remove and ease the tensions of the nerves except the yogic methods of relaxations and revitalization? The accumulation of thought wastes can be brushed by no other method than the process of meditation.

Fourth, diseases of functional disorders of the nervous system like neurosis, neurasthenia can successfully be treated by meditation. Applied meditation has to contribute a great deal towards its medical use. Meditation therapy will cure psychoneuroses, the various illnesses that arise in people who are in no sense insane. Meditation is useful in the prevention as well as the cure. Cases of psychoses can also be successfully treated by meditation.

Fifth, meditation is an awakener of the inner self. Through meditation the latent, or the unused faculties of the mind or the brain nerves are awakened. If the mind is free from memories of past experiences even just for some time, if it is absolutely tensionless, one-pointed, then its energies can be directed towards the exploration of the unknown, the unseen and the unheard regions. Some transcendental knowledge dawns through the sharp cut opened by the pointed mind.

Should the mind take up a problem and stick to it for several subsequent hours, days, months and years together, it sees a new light, finds a new approach to the problem. This is what great scientists have realized and achieved. Deep, concentrated and pointed meditation opens a new vista of life, or knowledge. Edison, the great scientist, admitted this fact that there was something within him which always prompted him towards the next step of his experiment.

All the vicissitudes of mind are yet unknown to mankind. The greatest scientists admit that the ultimate truth is yet not known to mankind. Nothing is the last truth on the subject so far touched by the scientists.

Sixth, meditation may have a market value also. Meditation may assist in rooting out several diseases like blood pressure, pain or diarrhoea. Meditation can serve as a defence to contagious diseases also.

The great psychologist, Freud, maintained that the events on the physical planes are but manifestations of the unconscious desires. If this be true, the root of all misery, ailment and illness is the blessed Id of Freud. The Hindu psychologists of old have also maintained similar views, except the difference in terminology. Freud's Id is nothing but a glimpse of chitta, the storehouse of all desires and primitive instincts. All diseases originate in the mind first. The mere idea or fear that, "I may catch a cold," or "I may contract the disease," prepares the body for reception of the germs. Meditation develops the willpower, frees the mind from the arrest of wrong notions, whims and fears.

A vast study and experimental data are required along the possibilities of meditation therapy. I have ample proofs at my hand to support this theory. An argument may be advanced, for example, that a child whose thinking is not mature, contracts diseases. Why? The experiments have shown that a child is merely a psychological being. A child of a tender age has much sense of taste, receptivity of surroundings, environment and atmosphere, and so on. It is a different thing whether he has learnt the art of expression like us. He

experiences, but lacks expressions of evolved methods. Close observation of a child's behaviour has proved that a child is more sensitive than an adult. He instinctively recognizes love, anger, hate, etc. He contracts diseases because his mind and body both are in infancy. Having acquired the point of the body and the mind he will learn to resist the germs mentally.

Last of all, meditation leads to samadhi, the culmination of evolution of the human mind. Through concentration, contemplation and meditation, the mind transcends the limits of the mind. The mind and body are the two thorns that prick the soul of man and cause pain and misery. If the body and the mind both are extinct, there can be no pain, no suffering, no sorrow, no ignorance and nothing that may bind or limit the power of the soul. A bird freed from the cage can soar to any height. Likewise, when consciousness, the self, or the soul transcends the limits of the body and the mind it enjoys supreme bliss, supreme power, supreme light. It may be wrong to say it enjoys. To be more correct, there will be no duality, no two existences of consciousness, of the knower and the known. Consciousness becomes one, a part of the supreme consciousness, or the cosmic consciousness.

As long as the mind and body are receptive towards their surroundings they act and react. Your repeated attempts to establish a harmonious relation between yourself and the surroundings consumes your vitality in a temporary solution of the problems. The mind seeking adjustment with each and every trifling matter exhausts its energies and disease, old age and death overpower you before time.

If you, through the instrument of vairagya and abhyasa, succeed in turning the face of the mind towards transcendental objects, it will give up its age-long habits of reacting on trifling incidents of life.

While yama and niyama make an objective approach to disciplining the mental life of a man, meditation is the subjective one heading towards the same end.



Tantra

Mantra Yantra Mandala

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Compiled by Dr Swami Vivekananda and published by Yoga Education Society, Lansing, Michigan, USA, *Tantra Mantra Yantra Mandala* contains an eye-opening series of lectures delivered by Sri Swami Satyananda from 8th to 10th March 1985 in London, UK.

Swami Vivekananda Saraswati (compiler)

Dr Swami Vivekananda (Australia), a physician and consultant psychiatrist, met Swami Satyananda in Australia in 1969. Since that time he explored ways to integrate the techniques of yoga with modern knowledge of the mind, body and healing. From 1977 onwards he travelled the world teaching and learning about the synergy between yoga and science. A gifted speaker, he captured his audience wherever he brought the message of yoga.

In his book, *Practical Yoga Psychology*, published by Yoga Publications Trust, he was able to share the deep understanding and insight of human nature with exceptional clarity and practical advice to all.

Introduction

Swami Satyananda has distilled the essence of tantra, modernizing the practices of this ancient science to fit our present-day needs. His guru, Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh, acknowledged him as a rare and brilliant scholar, having a profound understanding of the tantras, Upanishads and yogic texts. Swami Satyananda lays great emphasis on practice over philosophy, saying that in order to understand tantra it is necessary to delve deeply into the imagery and process, accessing the deeper layers of consciousness and developing higher levels of awareness and intuition. His teachings are clear, practical, scientific, refreshingly free of dogma and offer a complete, comprehensive method for all aspirants on the path to self-knowledge.

In 1964, Swamiji founded Bihar School of Yoga in Munger, Bihar, India, training men and women, sannyasins and householders alike in his yogic system. Swami Satyananda says, “Yoga will ultimately change the course of world events, emerging as a great world power, a transformative tool for peace.”



Tantra 1

8 March 1985, London

In the last few years, people have been talking about meditation and yet very little has been understood about it. Most of us understand meditation as a state of shutting the mind off from external experiences. If you are able to forget your environment, time and space, for the time being, then you feel very happy that you have been able to meditate.

There are people who are able to do it. They can transcend (I'll use the word for the time being). They can transcend name and form, time and space, and forget everything that is sensorial and everything that is mental, and yet they don't seem to have reached anywhere, even after practising for two, three or four decades. The evolution of consciousness, or the deeper relationship with the inner world, or the union with the creation outside, does not seem to take place. Therefore, it is necessary for us, first of all, to understand what is meant by meditation.

In yoga, the word for meditation is *dhyana*, which literally means 'unbroken awareness'. It doesn't mean contemplation! It doesn't even mean meditation! We do use the word meditation because everybody is accustomed to this word. This tradition of using the terms contemplation and meditation came from the great philosophers, and later continued within the precincts of the churches.

People in recent years tried meditation through various other means. They used drugs, they attempted meditation through drugs, but it proved that instead of evolving, the mind retarded. The mind did not progress. Therefore, in the ancient system of yoga, two words are used to denote that state which you understand as meditation.

In ancient days in India, they used to call it *vidya*, science, knowledge. Then after the advent of Gautam Buddha the word dhyana was used. This word dhyana in the local dialect of India became *jhala* and now it is called *zen*. Dhyana, jhala, and Zen.

Hatha yogis have their own system of meditation. Raja yoga has its own system of meditation. Jnana yoga has its own methods of meditation. Similarly, every form of yoga has its technology, method, system and tradition of meditation.

In this conference I would like to deal with tantric systems of meditation. In our age the mind has become disturbed and we find it very difficult to control the emotions, the mind, and the maya that affects the mind all the time during consciousness and unconsciousness. We have to find a way by which the flourishing, the awakening of inner consciousness can take place, should take place, without any effort, without any struggle, without any conflict, without any self-fighting or self-antagonism.

People are mostly rajasic by nature, or tamasic by nature. We believe in sattwa, all of us. We believe in equilibrium. We believe in the balance of mind. We believe in all good and great things, but we are not able to live up to that because we can't. We are rajasic by nature, tormented by passions and desires, ambitions, frustrations, happiness, depression. We do not have to hide this truth from ourselves. We are rajasic and we are tamasic. We are either predominantly tamasic or predominantly rajasic. We are not sattwic. Therefore, we are talking to the people of this generation who are rajasic and tamasic by temperament, and not sattwic by temperament. We are sattwic by faith. We are sattwic by belief. That is not our nature. That is not our

personality. That is not our upbringing. That is not how we have been brought up.

It is in this condition that we have to decide whether in dhyana yoga, in the process of meditation, we should continue to fight with ourselves all alone, or whether we should surrender. When our mind runs away should we continue, again and again, to return it to the main point of the meditation?

In the opinion of a tantric teacher this is not the right way for our generation and for our time. A person who is tantric by philosophy, by tradition and by practice, knows that fighting with oneself against one's own nature can lead to insanity. This is also the conclusion of the modern psychological system.

You have inherited a nature from your culture, from your parents and other sources. Now you are trying to develop yourself into something else which you are not able to be. Therefore the conflict takes place within the personality, although your idea is great. There is nothing to hide. Your idea is good. It is a noble idea. It is a great idea to control the mind. It is a good idea to subdue the mind. It is definitely one of the most wonderful ideas to keep the mind under control and tame it, but it is also a dangerous idea. It is a dangerous idea for our generation who has been brought up in a particular situation, in a particular cultural background.

In tantra the process of thinking is different. The thinking is, "Do not equate the process of meditation with intellect. Do not equate the process of meditation with cogitation, thinking, and deliberation." When you are meditating, what are you doing? Are you aware or are you thinking? Are you aware or are you contemplating? Are you aware or are you cogitating? Are you aware or are you deliberating?

You are thinking! You are not aware. Awareness is that state of mind which you have sometimes experienced in certain types of dreams. Where there is no cogitation, there is no deliberation. There is no *vitarka*, reasoning, and no *vichara*, enquiry. There is no ego. There is no intellect. There is no

buddhi. There is no duality. There is no awareness of the thinker. Sometimes in clear dream time this does take place.

But how to do it? How to disconnect the faculties of the mind with the process of dhyana yoga? When you meditate on Krishna, Christ, your guru or *Om*, what do you do? You proceed with your intellect. You proceed with your mind. You proceed with the process of thinking. No, you have to start with tantra. In tantra there are three important items:

The first is mantra.

The second is yantra.

The third is mandala.

I will not be able to tell you everything in detail, because most of the things I have said again and again, and have written in books. Nor is it possible to deal in detail with this intricate subject unless everybody has some sort of knowledge or some background. Yet I will try to do my best because I definitely know that, even though an idea can't change the whole emotional structure in your mind, something can trigger an experience, and for that experience you do not have to do so many mental exercises. I'm not against these mental exercises, for you know that I teach ajapa japa, kriya yoga, and many other things. It is not in the spirit of criticism that I am saying this, but I am trying to put it to you clearly that, if you want to trigger the inner supra-mental experience, you have to create an effect. That effect can be created without any link with the intellect, without any link with thinking and without any link with deliberation, and these are the three ways.

It is not necessary for me to deal in great detail about mantra, because it is a sound. It is not the name of God! It is not the name of a divinity! It is not the name of the Creator! It is just a sound, a sound which is an objective reality. Sound as you understand it in physics – something like that. Sound as wave, sound as frequencies, either low frequency, high frequency, very high frequency, or ultra high frequency sound. This sound has nothing to do with the religious beliefs to

which many of us belong. You can be religious, that's up to you of course, I am not. It is not a divine idea.

It is just a sound. You have thousands and millions of sounds which are the result of permutation and combination, but there are certain basic sounds, primary sounds. These primary sounds are known as *mantra*. *Om* is the primary sound. On the basis of this sound, *Om*, other sounds were permuted and combined and created, more and more. As you can see, I'm speaking and producing so many sounds. What is it? It is permutation and combination.

There are primary sounds, and these primary sounds are called mantras. On the basis of these primary sounds, you have secondary sounds. These secondary sounds are known as *bija mantras*. *Aum* is a primary sound which is a combination of three sounds: *ah* as you open the mouth and, as you close the mouth, *m-m-m*. As you keep on closing the mouth, in between is *oo*. *Ah-oo-mm*. Actually it is *ah* and *ma*. Tantrics say it is not just *Om*, it is *Aum*, opening and closing. Opening is creation. Closing is – you know what it is! Other secondary sounds you hear, like *Klim*, *Hrim*, *Shrim*, *Aim* and many other things, are known as secondary sounds.

These secondary sounds are the first range of permutation from these three: *A – U – M*. They are called *bija mantras*. *Bija mantras* are those mantras which are very potent, very powerful. They can explode the figures and forms of the nature and all other components of the mind.

What is the human mind? Thinking is not the mind. Thinking is an expression of the mind. Emotion is an expression of the mind. Remembering is an expression of the mind. Similarly, happiness and unhappiness, so on and so forth, what you call the mind, is not the mind.

The mind is the primary form of energy. I used to be taught in my school days that the mind is a bundle of habits. My school teacher taught me. I don't think he was right. I think he was wrong. The mind is not a bundle of habits. The mind is just a storehouse of energy, *shakti*. Just as when you have an atom and you explode it. What a fantastic thing

comes out of it, out of that little atom! The mind is subtler than the atom.

I am not comparing an abstract thing with an objective truth. I am trying to explain that there are states of energy. There are levels of energy. There are grades of energy. And energy exists in material form. Energy exists in subtle form. Energy exists in transcendental form, a form which we don't understand, which we can't understand, which is something beyond us.

This material form of energy is that which our scientists have been able to discover to some extent today. Atomic or nuclear energy as it is called is a material form of energy, but that is not the ultimate form of energy. The ultimate form of energy is something beyond the atom. Therefore it is said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (11:12):

When thousands of suns shine in the sky at the same time, what would be the brilliance? The same as the brilliance of one whose soul is enlightened.

That is the explosion of the mind, the subtler atom. Now even as you explode the atom in the external world, the material energy, in the same way the mind needs to be exploded.

I'm not asking you to explode your emotions. I'm not asking you to explode your passions, so that you may have to go to the mental hospital. I am using the word mind in the most classical, academic and scientific sense. When I use the word mind I am talking about a primal energy form which is a storehouse of much knowledge, which is a storehouse of timeless time, and which is a storehouse of eternal space.

Within the compass of that mind the whole universe lives in a lineage of form. The whole universe where your satellites are going to go, where you have black holes, the immense and eternal, endless galaxies about which we talk in modern science and astronomy (and which is, of course, true) and which are thousands and millions of light years from each other. The same universe in miniature form exists within you, within each one of us, and not only within human beings.

Within everything! Every speck, every object, everything in creation is potentially complete.

Now when you use the word, the mantra, what exactly do you do? Do you concentrate? In my opinion, and as I tell my disciples: no. Then what do you do? You just produce a sound. As you go on producing the sound, your mind can waver. Your mind can wander. You can think all and sundry. You can think everything, all kinds of rubbish, whatever you like. You don't have to control the mind.

Do you understand? Are you listening to me carefully? You do not have to control the mind. If you are thinking about the problems of family, do it. If you are thinking of money problems, do it. If you are thinking of your boyfriend or girlfriend, depression, frustration, disappointment or loss of a job or a friend, go on thinking. But keep on thinking, *Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya, Om Namah Shivaya*. Say it verbally, or murmur it, or say it mentally. If you find it difficult to say it mentally, write it in front of you. Not in Roman letters, in its own form.

Sound has a form, and that form I myself did not know. It came to me as a revelation through one of my most ignorant, illiterate disciples about two decades ago. I asked him to practise the mantra, *Om Namah Shivaya*. He asked what to do, and I told him to think about the sound, that is all. Concentrate on the sound. He did it. After a few months he came and told me that he sees so many things because he saw the form of the sound. For us it is difficult to conceive of, because we have conceived a form of the sound which we have created ourselves. If you think of *Om Namah Shivaya*, you usually think about *O.M. N.A.M.A.H. S.H.I.V.A.Y.A.* That's all. That is the barrier, that is the limitation which we have created with the mind.

When we go on practising the mantra, for half an hour, without fighting with the mind, but creating the sound vibration, these sound vibrations gradually create a change inside as the frequencies change. In the same way the nature of the experience of the mind also changes.

According to tantra there are many levels of sound. One is that level of sound which I am producing now. It can be heard by your ears, by your senses. Another form of sound is that which you can only experience yourself, which you alone can hear. In this way, they say that there are four levels of sound according to the frequency. When you say *Om, Om, Om, Om*, this is one frequency. When you think *Om* in the mind, the frequency is different. Please remember, the mantra is the same. Sound is the same. Thought is the same. *Om* there and *Om* here, but the frequencies are not the same. The frequency is different. Please remember, the mantra is the same, the sound is the same, the thought is the same, *Om* there and *Om* here, but the frequencies are not the same.

Therefore, when you are chanting *Om* and when you are thinking *Om*, when you are repeating *Om*, or when you are trying to feel *Om* within the mind, you are creating high frequency vibrations in the mind. By this practice, the subtle layers of the mind are opened.

Now, what are those layers of the mind? First of all, avidya. Avidya is the first layer that opens. Not *vidya*, not light. Avidya is the first layer that opens. *Avidya* is ignorance. Avidya is stupidity. Avidya is the total idiosyncrasies of human life. Avidya is the totality of samskaras. Avidya is the totality of karma. Avidya is the totality of karma, not your karma, maybe your parents' karma, your grandparents' karma, the DNA molecules. It may be the karma of your previous lives. It is complicated to explain. Sometimes you are infected by the karma of the people with whom you are not even concerned, because karma keeps moving like a virus. Karma is not action. Karma is a discharge which keeps on flowing from your personality, like electromagnetic waves, like solar waves. You don't see them but they are there.

An electromagnetic wave, do you see that? Microwave, do you see it. Or radio waves, do you see them? No, you don't see them but they are there. In the same way that they are there, these waves are there. We don't see them.

These karmas, by which sometimes we are inflicted and affected, are the karmas of the people with whom we have least concern. These karmas have to come out first! Before you are able to see your beautiful face in the mirror, the mirror has to be cleaned. Even as the sun is not seen because of the clouds, in the same way the inner experience cannot be had unless avidya is removed.

The process of removing avidya is the experiences which you have, which you call spiritual experiences. Either in dream, or in meditation, or in mantra, you have a lot of these experiences. These experiences don't really mean anything. You don't even have to assess them. You do not even have to define them. You don't even have to ask for an explanation from your teacher, from your guru. You don't have to ask, "I see this and I see that, what does it mean? I saw a light going up, I saw a light coming down, I saw red entering into my stomach, I saw something was coming out of my toes. I saw a dead body, I saw that I was eating a goat." So many things – flowers, for instance. These are just an illustration. These are experiences which relate to the karmas which constitute avidya. Each karma which we do, which we have done, takes a particular shape. It loses its original shape.

Supposing I have committed a bad karma, I have done something wrong. Now, the whole process of karma is being recorded, here on the screen of the mind, in exactly the same way that it is being done. I take a revolver and kill somebody. It is being recorded, but when it is recorded within the mind, within the form of karma, it is not recorded exactly as it happens. It is recorded in a very microscopic form that is called *samskara*, archetype. It is not the same form in which you get up, take a revolver and shoot someone, and then he dies and that is a karma, no!

That particular action is not there completely. The whole thing is reduced to what we call a symbol inside. That sign comes out when you practise mantra, yantra and mandala.

Hari Om Tat Sat, I'll talk to you again tomorrow.

Mantra, Mind and Matter

8 March 1985, London

Swamiji, in a talk on mantra you said people have a choice to fight alone or surrender. Would you expand on this idea, giving us some feeling for what it is we might surrender to?

When I say that during the practice of mantra you have to surrender, I mean that you should let your thoughts move on, without any interference. When the thoughts are allowed to move, you are surrendering! Usually this does not happen when you are practising mantra and meditation. If an external idea comes into your mind you try your level best to chase it out of the frame of your mind. In the tantric concept this is not something which is desirable. The natural thought process should be allowed to flow, unhindered, unobstructed. At the same time the smooth and spontaneous flow of your mantra should also be continued. In the course of time your thoughts will transform into psychic feelings, psychic experiences.

Thoughts get transformed and when they are transformed they become psychic. You begin to see visions. You begin to see forms and colours. You begin to hear sounds and many more things. You know about this, you call it experience, psychic experience. These psychic experiences are nothing but your thoughts transformed at a later stage, and this can only happen if you surrender.

Could you explain some of the differences between the human mind and the universal mind, and also between mind and matter?

The individual mind and the universal mind, this is how it should be understood.

There is no such thing as the human mind. The mind is present in every speck of creation. Not only animals, not only vegetables, even the minerals, have a mind, but in a different state. The individual mind is limited by maya, by avidya, by samskara, and by a framework of personality. This framework of personality is created by the nature and type of one's birth and one's surroundings. It is said that for lives after lives, we humans have individualized our mind, due to karma, due to desire and other things. When the ego is removed and when the mind goes beyond the barriers of ego and personality, then the individual mind and the universal mind are both the same. Just as the electrical energy and the light bulb, the light which is here now, are the same. And the electrical energy which is being generated at the electrical energy station and this light are the same.

In the same way, the individual mind and the universal mind are not two different things. The individual mind is an individual circuit. This is how the mind expresses itself through different objects, through different things and through different species.

As you know, everything in this universe is subject to evolution. Everything is not created and everything was not created, and everything cannot be created at the same time. In the process of evolution when matter is created, it takes a certain amount of time. At a later period of evolution another form of matter comes into existence. Matter is a very general word which can be used for anything, for living matter, dead matter, an invisible thing, a visible thing, something which you know and something which you don't know. Therefore, in the process of evolution, matter has expanded itself into many forms, into many shapes, we don't know why, but it has. These various forms,

objects and shapes in the form of creation, like planets and stars and other things, including your earth, human beings, animals, vegetable kingdom, minerals, have come to be individualized. When you are born as a human being then you develop a special consciousness. What is that special consciousness? That special consciousness is called jnanam.

Jnanam does not mean knowledge. *Jnanam* means 'awareness of the entire process of existence, in relation to time and space'. I am existing. I know I am existing. I know that I know that I am existing. This is called the knowledge about myself in relation to time and space.

We are here listening about yoga and such matters. We are not only listening, we also know that we are listening. We know that we know that we are listening. There is an awareness of the awareness of knowledge which is called jnanam. Jnanam is not a process of intellectual knowledge. It is that particular knowledge of which you become the witness, you become the observer. You become the seer. This is the special faculty of the human being. Of course, not all human beings have this ability, but I believe most people can have it, if they try.

About sixteen years ago I went to a country, I don't want to name it. I met an intellectual there. He wanted to know what it is that I teach. I told him that I teach ajapa japa, "Sit down, and breathe in and out, and try to observe that you are breathing in and out." He couldn't understand it. He said, "What do you mean? I know that I am breathing. I don't understand that." It is something which you won't be able to understand. There was another gentleman there. He was from England. He understood!

This is called a special faculty of jnanam. When this jnanam takes place then the matter is broken, the matter is split. Then the birth of higher knowledge takes place and the individual mind becomes the universal mind. The individual mind and the universal mind are two important topics in Indian philosophy especially in yoga and tantra.

They say that the individual mind is present in waking, sleep and dreams. These three states represent the egotistical state of mind. When you are able to develop a state which is neither waking, nor dream, nor sleep, that is *dhyana*, or meditation, which is none of these three. That is called *turiya*, the fourth state is called *turiya*. This *turiya* state is a state of total awakening. I am using the words – total awakening. Waking, sleep and dream, these are not the states of total awakening. They are partial states.

These states are not homogeneous. Therefore, the ego there is individualized by the circumstances of the mind, the body, and the senses. When you are able to develop a constant state of awareness, when you are aware not only of the external life but at the same time you are aware of an inner universe, then you are not only able to see a river but you are able to see the ocean which the river is meeting, the confluence of both, the confluence of individual consciousness with universal consciousness. It is at that time that the universal consciousness embraces individual consciousness.

Hari Om Tat Sat



The mind cannot be pacified or become steady. It is not the nature of the mind. Its nature is activity. Mantra cleans the mind. A sound becomes the basis and reduces or eliminates suppressions and makes the mind free from dissipations. It is the easiest form of yoga.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Mantra and Yantra

9 March 1985, London

The practice of mantra is considered to be very important in tantric meditation. It makes one free from avidya. It makes the mind free. It liberates the mind, and thereby the mind becomes purified.

The literal meaning of the word *mantra* is 'that which frees or liberates the mind'. It seems that the pristine clothing of the mind is mixed up with the elements of avidya and something has to be done to remove the karma, the effects and the samskaras. For that the practice of mantra is to be done. Mantra should not be practised in the same spirit that we practise meditation, with a lot of stress, with a lot of tension, with a lot of stiffness in the body and mind. No, in fact, meditation need not be practised. Meditation is the state of mind which happens. During the practice of mantra you have to employ different methods, like practising the mantra with the natural breath, with ujjayi breath, in different parts of the body, like the spine or the forehead, or in the psychic centres, such as in the chakras of kundalini. There are many more ways in which mantra can be practised. By the practice of mantra, the mind transforms itself.

In the tantric system, mantra is considered to have varna. *Varna* means colour. Every sound, every mantra, has a colour of its own, according to the classification of the tattwas, according to the classification of the three gunas,

and according to the classification of the seven levels of consciousness. These sounds have various colours, and these colours often appear during your practice. In the science of swara yoga, which is also a branch of tantra, it is said that when you practise chidakasha dharana, when you close your eyes and concentrate on the frontal part of the brain, with your ears plugged and eyelids pressed, you can see the flow of those tattwas every one and half minutes. It is not necessary for me to tell you which colour is represented by which element. It will be necessary for you to study that for yourself, in detail. One can observe the relationship of a particular colour with a particular tattwa, with a particular state of mind. Emotional stress or peace of mind, a relaxed state of mind or tension, a lot of passion or excitement, or being just like a vegetable, these different states of mind represent the effect of a particular colour in the brain and the mind.

The mantra shastras, the books on mantra, say that these mantras, in the form of sound, are also located in different parts of the body. These sounds, as you may have studied in the science of acupuncture, are the different points of the meridians, the different points of the chakras, and the flow of energy on the pathway. There are different points where each and every sound is located. The chart of this is well defined in the tantric system.

Now, when you practise the mantra, the mind throws off, first of all, colours, then figures, forms, sounds, then maybe some nightmares. Those who are practising should be prepared to face this. If you do not want to face this and if you can't face this, then you won't achieve anything. Because the further stages of the mind, the further stages of spirit or the higher stages of your own self can be reached only after you have crossed this unpleasant, unwanted barrier, not before that. You will have to face your fears. You will have to face your own nightmares.

There is a quality of the mind which we have accumulated for a very long time, through association with our various

incarnations, through our association with our people, through our association with our own hang-ups. These have accumulated. What are you going to do with them? Are you going to reach the land of spirit with that donkey's load? Is it possible, or will it be necessary for us to shed this load now? Therefore, meditation in tantra begins with mantra, where practice alone is emphasized and experiences are not emphasized, but are accepted. You will see forms. You will see colours. You will hear sounds. You may see even Christ or Rama or Krishna, or even me, it doesn't matter. That is you! That's you and not the spiritual you. That is the ignorant you, the impure you which you have been protecting in your bosom for a long, long time. It is that ego, it is that divided field of energy, not the unified field of energy. That divided field of energy which is the *ahamkara*, the hard shell. When it begins to break, when it is broken, then there is an emergence which we call yantra.

Yantras are not geometrical diagrams imagined by an artist. They are the mathematical or scientific equation or scientific symbol, of everything that is existing in this world, in this universe, in this material form. This is my gross form, but I have another form in this universe. That is called yantra. I have a yantric form.

Every element, every visible and invisible thing, the sun and the moon, the planets, the great oceans, mountains, forests and animals – name anything you like. Everything has a different form. That form is known as yantra. Yantra, therefore, represents matter and space at the same time.

It is not necessary for me to tell you what the modern scientists think about these geometrical diagrams in relation to the symbolism of matter and in relation to the symbolism of the universal processes. There are many universal processes which you take for granted. You accept them, but you don't understand them. I have been talking to you and you have understood, more or less. How are you able to understand? Just because it is in English, or just because you know yoga, or just because there has already

been a programming in your mind about these things, so you understand? No, there is an inexplicable process of understanding inherent in the quality of the human mind which we don't know and which the scientists also will not be able to know. It is a very baffling question.

How do we understand? And what is the process of understanding? In the same way, the process of understanding and other processes in the universe cannot be adequately put into a form unless you give a symbology to it. Do you understand? A symbology has to be given. This symbology is of two types: the tantric symbology and the mythological symbology. The mythological symbology is like that of the Egyptians, Greeks and Hindus. They have mythological symbology: Kali, Durga and many others. There are half animals, half fish, half serpents, half beautiful women and half ugly women. Some black, some white, some with four hands, some with six or eight hands. Some are really benign, some are really cruel. Some are destroyers, some are preservers and some are compassionate. These mythological symbols which we know from the Egyptians, Greeks and Hindus (Hindus have the most) represent those invisible processes taking place in the universe. This happens with the practice of mantra. Then comes the development of what you call yantra. And what are these yantras?

During the practice of mantra, after some time, you begin to see circles, streaks of light or a point. This point is important. It is called bindu. In tantra, *bindu* means drop. Bindu means point. This particular point is the minimum conceivable concept of space. It is to this extent that you can reduce the grossness of the mind. If your mind can be reduced to the extent of a point, then it is called subtle and it is called somewhat transcendental. So bindu is the centre of all the yantras. These yantras influence the deeper unconscious layers of the mind.

A thought influences the conscious layer of the mind. If I show you a beautiful flower, it will influence your mind, and you say, "Oh, it's beautiful!" If I show you something

ugly, you say, “Oh, horrible,” because it is influencing your conscious mind. There are things that can influence your conscious mind and there are things which can spontaneously influence your subconscious mind, even if you are not aware of it.

However, I am not talking about the influences on the conscious and subconscious mind. I am talking about influencing the unconscious. The unconscious in tantra is a powerful reservoir of mental void, of divine or undefinable potential. Don't use any name. Don't say divine or anything. It is a reservoir somewhere within you, within or outside you. There comes a moment when you are neither outside nor inside. It is an untapped reservoir of potential. It is a dormant, potential state. It is sleeping. It is unmanifest.

That is called the unconscious in tantra. I'm not trying to use the word unconscious in the same way that modern psychology uses it. If the term unconscious in modern psychology was properly interpreted in terms of yoga, then it would also mean the same, but there it means the beginning of insanity. Here it means the beginning of wisdom, not the beginning of insanity. What is it? It is called kundalini. It is not she, it is not he, it is not it! Whatever name we use is not adequate. We are only giving you a glimpse.

It has been defined in various ways in tantra. In order to influence that unconscious state of your being, you have to take up certain practices, certain things. You cannot go through the intellect. “My kundalini is awakening now, it is up to my navel, now it has gone up to anahata . . .” It is all rubbish! Don't mind if you've said this. When kundalini begins to wake up you won't know that it is happening. Take a few bottles of scotch or champagne. You forget your name and form. You forget your honour and prestige. You forget your status, your dignity. You can't believe it, when awakening of kundalini takes place. You will forget your time and space. So don't say, “My kundalini is awakening now,” through auto-suggestion. No auto-suggestion. The unconscious is beyond auto-suggestion. It is beyond all

religious ideals and religious practices. Of course, religious practices in the course of time may enable you to handle something. That's another matter.

The particular practice of yantra can deal with the exploration and awakening of this unconscious being, which is in you, and this unconscious being is known by various names.

In tantra there is a very important practice called tattwa shuddhi. I would like to tell you just a little bit about it. Tattwa shuddhi is a practice in tantra which is not done every day. It is done once a year for eleven or twelve days. In this practice of tattwa shuddhi, the body is considered to be composed of yantras. You are just a geometrical mass. Here you are the triangle, and here you are the square. You are just a geometrical pattern. You are the yantra.

In these yantras you have different colours. From the top to the bottom, you don't have just one colour, because you are not one colour. We are a mixture, we are a combination of three primordial colours. These three primordial colours represent the three states of nature, *prakriti*. These three states of nature are known as *sattwa*, equilibrium, *rajas*, activity, the most prominent in evolution, and *tamas*, hibernation, dormancy. These three states are represented by three colours. We are a combination of all these three.

Sometimes *sattwa* becomes a problem, it becomes predominant. That is how our teachers, our gurus, are pleased. Our books teach us all the time to be *sattwic*. So intellectually or philosophically or sect-wise, religion-wise, we are *sattwic*. "Be good, do good, be kind, be compassionate." We believe in this, don't we? We believe in this. This is our *sattwic* belief. But what are we? On the top we are *sattwic*. On the intellectual plane, we are *sattwic*. In the realm of religious belief, we are *sattwic*. In the realm of our social conventions, so on and so forth, we are *sattwic*. But are we really *sattwic*?

We are *rajasic*. How are we *rajasic*? Because we have desires. Accept it. Every moment we have desires. Not a moment passes without desire. There may be ordinary desire

or wants. "I want a cup of tea, a glass of water. I want to drink something. I want to go. I want to come. I want to do this. I want to do that." But there may also be very powerful desires such as the desire to be a world leader, to be a prophet, to be a messiah, to be a big guru. These are called desires, cravings, wants and passions. That is the sign of the presence of rajoguna in us.

So, we have so much of this rajasic stuff in us that the sattwic thread cannot hold properly. Sometimes it breaks. Sometimes very good people become criminal and they are jailed because they are trying to hold the fire with only an ordinary plastic cover and it breaks. Every day, many swamis, many gurus, many priests, many people, so-called good people, do so many things which we find difficult to accept. We do these things because our nature is essentially rajasic.

How is it possible, therefore, for us to purify that structure of our personality about which we don't really know very much? Nor do we want to accept it. And if we accepted it, we would go insane. We have so many complexes about us. We have so much guilt about us. We have so many things about us that we can't function properly in our day-to-day life.

As such, the *sadhana*, spiritual practice, of tattwa shuddhi is of paramount importance before taking to any tantric practice, whether it is kriya yoga, mantra yoga or any other powerful yogic or tantric practice. Tattwa shuddhi is something like cleansing the whole vessel, the whole structure, the whole body, the whole mind, and thereby helps to create a congenial atmosphere.

The importance of tattwa shuddhi lies in the realization of that being within us which is ruling our destiny, controlling our actions and our thoughts every minute. In tantra it is called papa purusha, Christians will understand it as the 'eternal sin', papa purusha. That being which makes us commit those acts which rebound on us again and again.

There are karmas which do not rebound. They are called *nishkama*, karma yoga, that is karma done with total detachment, karma done with selflessness. Any karma, any

action, done with selflessness, with total detachment, does not rebound on us. It does not create *papa*, sin. It does not feed that being. However, any action done with the intention of fulfilling motives rebounds on us again and again and again. Thereby the *papa purusha* becomes more powerful. When that being becomes more powerful, the chances of enlightenment and the chances of inner awareness become remote. You can't go forward.

Now here is the important thing. In other forms of yoga meditation is achieved by practice. You know it. By constant effort. Patanjali said in the *Yoga Sutras*, "Go on, again and again practising. By constant, relentless practice, by personal effort, by purifying the mind, by perfecting the *asana*, by holding onto the breath. You bring your mind to one-pointedness!" Tantra says something else. You should now be prepared to listen. You will mark my words very carefully!

Meditation is an effect of the awakening of kundalini!

The awakening of kundalini is not an effect of meditation!

Meditation is an effect of the awakened kundalini. When, through the practice of mantra yoga, the realization of the yantra takes place, sounds are heard, forms are seen, smells are smelled, fears are experienced (but not to the extent that you are sent to the mental hospital). Then a moment comes when awakening takes place. At the moment when awakening takes place, the mind drops just like mercury from 15 degrees centigrade to 10 – 9 – 8 – 7 – 6 – 5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 0, then maybe minus, because the concept of mind is based on *avidya*. As long as there is a divided field of energy there is this worldly mind. Once the unified field of energy is realized, then the duality of the individual mind and the cosmic or universal mind is completely mitigated.

If fifteen or twenty or any number of pitchers containing water are placed in a well full of water, they are divided. There is water inside the pitcher. There is water outside the pitcher in the well. They are not unified because there is a barrier. And what is that barrier? The pitcher. You break it.

Once the pitchers you have put in the well are broken then the water of the pitcher and the water of the well mingle.

That is called unified, unified field of energy. When the individual consciousness and the universal consciousness become one it is this unified field theory that you have studied about in modern science. This unified field theory can help us understand the relationship between the individual mind and the universal mind. We see that the individual mind and the universal mind are not two different entities. They are one and the same.

The only thing is the individual mind is contained in its own stuff. It's all karma. It's all samskara which the mind is carrying! You have to destroy those karmas and samskaras. So, in the tantric system of meditation, first comes mantra, then comes yantra and then awakening of kundalini takes place.

Now, we are talking about the awakening of kundalini. I have already explained to you, in my way, that there is in us an untapped, unknown reservoir of a mysterious substance. You can call it energy, you can call it substance, you can call it 'something' – whatever you like.

The yogis have preferred to call it kundalini. They have used the word *kundalini* because it is situated in the 'pit'. Most books on kundalini yoga, however, talk about 'the coil'. I am not being critical of those authors, which include me. Once I also wrote that way. I didn't know then. I was only consulting the books at that time. I thought that there was a coiled serpent. In Sanskrit the word *kundal* means coil. But the Sanskrit word kundalini is derived from kunda. *Kunda* means a deep place of fire. Where a fire is lit, this is called kunda.

You may know that in India people light the fire in a deep place, a pit. When the fire is lit, they offer a mixture of barley, sesame, butter, maybe one or two more things, and they mix that and offer it to the fire. This particular place is called the kunda, and this kundalini is that particular reservoir within us which is situated in the pit. Where is that pit? Is it in the subtle body? Or is it in the causal body? Or is it in the gross body?

According to Samkhya philosophy, according to tantric philosophy and according to vedantic philosophy, there are many, many levels of bodies, but all of them are broadly classified into three. One is called the gross body which, of course, you know. Everything has a gross body. The trees have a gross body, the animals have gross bodies. Creatures have gross bodies. Oceans and continents have gross bodies. They are called *sthoola sharira*, the gross body, which can be perceived by the senses, through the eyes, through the nose, and so on.

The second classification of the body is that of the subtle bodies. Subtle bodies, *sukshma sharira*, are those bodies which cannot be perceived through the gross medium of the senses, which can be understood by the deeper senses like the mind, intellect, intuition and psyche. Then there is a third classification of the body. This causal body is called *karana sharira*. This relates to the processes of causality in the whole universal scheme.

In the universe, in the process of creation, there are three things: time, space and causality. This third thing called causality, which is concerned with the causal body, is not some thing. It is a constant interaction between the cause and effect of different things that are happening inside you and outside of you. It is difficult to define. It is called *karana sharira*. It is this *karana sharira* which is considered to be the unconscious. This *karana sharira* is supposed to be the seat of kundalini. Where is this *karana sharira* to be fixed, to be allotted in this physical body?

Are these three bodies separate from each other? Or do they live within each other? Just like the butter in the milk, and the milk in the butter. Where is the butter in the milk and the milk in the butter? The three bodies are interspersed. They are mixed up. You have to separate them by constant practice. Therefore, consider this physical body as the base. We have to decide and define where the place is in this physical body for that particular faculty of the subtle body.

Thought – where is thought?

Emotion – where is the seat of emotion, here or there?

Where is the seat of passion?

Where is the seat of fear?

Of course, they are subtle things, but there is a seat in this physical body for them.

In the same way, where is the seat of kundalini in this physical body? Where is the seat of the causal body? Is the seat of the physical body up on the head? Or is the seat of the causal body somewhere here in the navel, in the stomach? The yogis have made it distinctly clear, and there are no two opinions about it. It is in mooladhara chakra. That is the seat of karana sharira, the seat of the causal body, the seat of the universal unconscious, or the seat of the individual unconscious. It is fixed in mooladhara. And where is mooladhara chakra? *Moola* means primordial, the root. *Adhara* means basis, substratum, the foundation on which something stands and support. I am supported by this rostrum. I am sitting here. If it is removed, I will fall down. So this is the adhara.

Mooladhara is the primordial basis for the consciousness of human beings, of human existence. Where is it again? Where is our basis? Where is our support? Where do we spring from? We spring from mother's uterus. At the root of the uterus in the female, behind the cervix, there is a tiny place, a tiny point, which is the fixed point of mooladhara chakra. It is there that the primordial, universal unconscious is to be accepted.

In the male body it is at the root of the spine, in between the urinary and the excretory organs, in the perineum, the coccyx. There is a very little, tiny space. It might be as tiny as a point. It is here that this causal body is to be found and understood. This is the accepted seat of kundalini in this physical body.

Kindly remember what I say. Although the physical point of kundalini is not at all physical, it does influence the physical body in the course of time. When the awakening

takes place, the elements of the body can change. The structure of the body can change. The metabolism in the body can change. The nature of the body can change. The nature of the mind can change. The subtle nature, the gross nature, the gross body and the subtle body can change or maybe sometimes not even change. It is not subtle and it is not gross. It is beyond both.

For the sake of understanding and for the sake of facility, I must explain to you that while the subtle body, gross body and causal body are three distinct planes of universal reality, they are interspersed, entwined with each other. They are so close to each other that you have to explain the three of them by comparison. Not without comparison.

There have been many talks about it. People have said, "Well, we dissected the whole spinal cord. We didn't find the chakras." How will you find them? In the same way, if you dissected this radio, where would you find the BBC? You won't find it there because that is the basis of energy, the basis of reception. If you completely take away all the things you won't find anything in the transistor.

You won't find anything there. In the same way, if you dissected the spinal cord, you wouldn't find the chakras. You won't find the lotus flower with four petals, eight petals, twelve petals or sixteen petals, with the mantras. Even if you hear *Lam, Vam, Ram, Yam*, nothing, no sound, no japa! You can't hear any sound!

You see, we are talking about the causal body by trying to make the physical body a base. You aren't able to understand. If you were able to understand, then you could completely transcend the descriptions of the physical body and talk about the kundalini directly.

The awakening of kundalini is an experience which is very powerful, whatever it is. It is very powerful. When it begins to happen, you don't have to think how to meditate. You don't have to concentrate the mind. A moment before, your mind was jumping like a monkey. A moment before, your mind was moving hither and thither, in thoughts, in

worrying, anxieties and fears. Suddenly the awakening takes place. Everything seems to stand still.

Buddha said the same thing. A few moments before enlightenment, just a few moments before enlightenment, he had so much conflict, so much thinking. He wrote this in his chronicles. He was thinking and suddenly he saw the darkness vanishing, and the moonlit night was rising and everything became unified. Do you understand? Everything became homogeneous. He began to feel not only peace; he not only began to feel one with the whole universe. He said that he forgot everything.

And what is meditation? Meditation is when you are able to transcend duality of the mind and duality of knowledge. “I am meditating,” is duality. In meditation, the meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation are unified.

That is what Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* talk about. If you have read the sutras of Patanjali, he says that when meditation takes place, the mind becomes constant without any interruptions like one line. You draw one line on the blackboard, straight. One line from one end to the other is the symbol of meditation.

What is fluctuation? You draw the line, break it and some other line intercepts. Criss-cross, criss-cross. Sometimes it becomes this or that. Only one line is called *advaita*, no duality. The scientific version for *advaita* is ‘unified field of consciousness’. If you are able to have this unified field of consciousness, through the awakening of kundalini, then that is meditation.

Tantra is trying to tell us that meditation is something which is an effect of something happening in your deeper spiritual existence.

Hari Om Tat Sat



Spiritual Life

9 March 1985, London

You place a lot of importance on ashram life as well as yoga tuition. How could the establishment of an ashram be of benefit to yoga aspirants in our society, here in the UK?

For those aspirants who want to experience a complete life, an exposure to ashram life is a must. We live in a world where we are taught that the way in which we live cannot change, although we want it to. We think, and we are made to think, that this is the only way to live in the world, to live with a husband and children, or with money, a family and a job. This is the only way to live. We think there is no other way.

We always talk about duties and responsibilities, but we have never realized that these commitments, obligations and duties are our own creations. We think that they are imposed upon us by a higher power. It's not true. We choose them.

The guru of Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, used to say that when you hold onto a tree and grab it, you say, "The tree doesn't leave me." Well, you are grabbing it, the tree is not grabbing you. It is you who is grabbing the responsibilities, commitments and obligations. They are not grabbing you. If you want to be free, you can be free. This is the first thing that you have to understand, which you cannot understand while you are in this ashrama. This ashrama is the householder's ashrama.

According to the planned system of society, there are four ashramas: first is the ashrama where you study, school, college, and university. Second is the householder's ashrama, where you make mistakes and learn, experience, enjoy and suffer, and expose yourself to different emotional, mental and psychological turmoil. The third ashrama is the ashrama where your guru lives, where aspirants live. Here, if you live in this ashrama, you can make an inquest upon the entire lifestyle. There you get flashes that you could function this way, or you could interact with your husband, wife and children in that way. Or you could take that catastrophe this way or you could face the calamity that way. Or, if you could have done that, then that person would not have committed suicide. So many ideas automatically spring from the bottom of your wise self, from your wisdom. This is possible when you are in the ashram life.

There are many more aspects of ashram life, which I have always tried to explain to people. I don't consider ashram life, I have never considered ashram life, and I shall never consider ashram life to be a shelter for the recluse. I don't believe that one can be a recluse.

There is no such thing. You have to understand life. Face your thoughts, mind and psychological personality. You have to face yourself, but in such a way that it doesn't put you into confusion and complication. Rather, it takes you out of it, at least to some extent. And it is possible by you. Yes, you can do it! You don't have to take help from anybody, of course, if there is someone to help you, well and good.

In every person there is wisdom to come out of these confusions and idiosyncrasies. There is wisdom in everybody which can teach and inspire you to act, to interact, to respond to different areas of life, people and circumstances, so that the best of happiness can be experienced in life.

There are three aspects of life which we would like you to remember: satyam, shivam, and sundaram. These are the three aspects of life. This is the truth about life. This is the real nature of life.

Satyam means truth.

Shivam means auspiciousness, everything which is good.

Sundaram means beauty.

This is the essential nature of everyone's life, but you don't experience it. You always experience falsehood. You always experience problems. You always experience dirt, impurity and the vulgarity in life. Why? Not because these things exist in life, but because you are not able to handle it. You are not able to accept it. You are not able to respond correctly.

An auspicious situation, an opportunity for growth, becomes bad in life because of you, and this you is the mind. This mind can be tuned, it can be trained and developed in an ashram situation.

In India we have had this ashram culture for thousands of years. Many times it was destroyed, but it survived, because of us, because we don't depend on anyone's money or quality of patronage, social patronage or economics. We live by ourselves. If you don't give us food, we know how to earn it ourselves. So we survive, because we live an independent and free life. We don't depend on anyone. After a while we thought we should go to the West, because perhaps there should be certain changes or not even changes, but adjustments.

So I sent some management to Australia. We have the largest number of ashrams in Australia. They are in every city, in every town, full-fledged and it works well. People like it. Children like it, men and women like it, village people like it, criminals like it, drug addicts like it, prostitutes like it. Why? Because they found satyam, shivam and sundaram. We are all searching for these three.

I went to France and to the United Kingdom. Then I went to Colombia, South America. Ashrams also started flourishing, despite the disturbing political conditions, one here and one there, and still things are going on very well.

Last year I started thinking about Europe. So I took out my file and gave it to Swami Sivamurti and said, "Now in

Greece there shall be an ashram where swamis will live. They will come and toil, do selfless work and karma yoga, live a different life. If possible, they will stay for six months or one year. They can even become a Hollywood star by shaving their heads! And then they can go back.” We have started it. After this I have the file of Italy. I have not opened it yet.

After the Greek ashram is ready, is functional for me, then the ashram in Italy will have to start. I have already hinted this to Swami Anandananda. He is here and I have the file here.

In the same way the file for the United Kingdom, for England, is also in my pocket. I am making it, but the entries are not quite ready. When it is ready it will be given to you people.

You must keep in mind that an ashram is not a religious place. An ashram is not a place of puritans. An ashram is not a monastery. An ashram is a place of young people who give their sweat and energy, and who work hard.

Making gardens, beautiful buildings, nice printing presses, books, art, carpentry and painting. They have to create. It is a place for people to contribute, to express, to give, to manifest the potential creativity in humankind.

In order to give that in your society it is necessary that you live a selfless life for three to six months, or one year. Live like a sannyasin. After that, after one or two or three or four months, or by periodic visits, you will find a new attitude to life, a new meaning of life and a new method to handle this most complicated, psychologically permeated, supercharged life in a very smooth way.

Could you please explain the difference between full sannyasa and karma sannyasa?

Full sannyasa is total freedom. You move like a breeze, like the wind. When you are in England, you are English. When you are in France, you are English no more. You accept your nationalities because that is the practical side of your society. Actually, it is not true.

I have a passport, but I don't accept it because I don't believe in it. I have it because I have to have it; otherwise I wouldn't be able to leave India. It is a practical thing, but it is not true. I was born of Hindu parents, but I'm not a Hindu. What's a Hindu? How can a Hindu mother give birth to a Hindu son? I have my own mind. It is entirely different from my parents'. It is entirely different from my tradition. I have developed it myself, by circumstances, by struggle, by fight, by revolution, by re-thinking.

That is *sannyasa*. *Sannyasins* do not belong to anyone. They are the lone travellers. Life is not monotony to them. They are never bored with seclusion. For five to ten years just close me in a room. I can sit there without seeing anybody's face, because when I am alone, I am with myself. Otherwise, I'm out of myself. I'm with you, I'm with him or her, I'm with the situation, I'm with the object, with good things, with bad things, with beautiful things, but not with myself.

Sannyasins are those people who don't live for themselves. When Buddha used to give *sannyasa* to his disciples he used to say, "For the good of others only." *Sannyasins* have to take up a problem for themselves, according to the times. Then they have to give selfless service to life.

A *sannyasin* pays no allegiance to any social, political, economic, religious or historical structure. He or she is not a destructive person, but does not pay allegiance to anyone. I don't pay any. Of course, my disciples may not think that way. They may have their own intellectual limitations. They may be attached to this or to that. They may love this person, they may love that person, but the real point is this: do we believe that it is possible for a person to function with utmost independence? Can a person function with absolute unselfishness and total detachment with no relatedness to anyone? At the same time, can that person live a full life and give his or her share to the evolution of humankind in the form of literature, philosophy, art and ideas in order to create a better future for people, and in order that humankind may divert itself from wrong thinking,

destructive thinking, self-destruction and make a more creative way of living.

Why should a man not work as a carpenter? Why should he become a criminal? Why should he not work as a gardener? Why should he be a murderer? Why does a man rape a woman? Because he has created it. He is stuck. Nobody is teaching him to be creative. When creativity is misdirected, it becomes criminality. When criminality in society is removed, then you don't have to remove the criminals. You have to inspire. You have to support the creative side of life. Sannyasa is that aspect.

In India we believe that if India has sustained itself for thousands of years, the political kicks, blood and accidents, it is because of sannyasins. Because every now and then, when there have been problems in society, sannyasins have come out and directed them. They shall do it.

Karma sannyasins are those people who cannot do this, who want to, but do not have a way to do it. They want to live with their spouse, they want to live with their children, they want to love. They want to work. They have motivations. They have desires. They have passions. At the same time, they want to grow in spirituality. They want to unfold their spirit or their consciousness. It is for these people that karma sannyasa is another path.

There is no structural or basic change in the pattern of life. You will live with your family. You maintain the relationships with your people. You go to your job and office as usual. You have your interactions with your friends and others as before, but you remember that the main purpose of human life is to unfold in spirit and consciousness. Not merely to enjoy the objects of the senses.

If you realize that the purpose of life is to unfold the spirit or the consciousness, then you are ready for karma sannyasa. A karma sannyasin is a traveller on the path of spiritual life. He is serious about it, he is making inquest into the possibility of spiritual perfection and spiritual revelations.

However, the inquest itself is not enough. The reason for the disturbing factors in our lives which are due to ignorance may be wrong planning, or wrong philosophy, or mishandling of life and then what happens? There is mental turmoil. There is emotional turmoil on account of our relationships, our happiness, our experiences, our children, our spouse and many other things.

That creates more and more karma. There are storms in life. We become so listless, so restless, that instead of thinking about the spiritual perfections in life, instead of thinking about our spiritual unfoldment, we are so worried about our anxieties that we don't know what to do with them. We always keep on thinking about what to do. We are worried about the husband, and the husband is worried about the wife, children, friends, about being taken to court, about income tax, about the business going down, about the business going wrong. There are so many things I cannot even make a catalogue of them. There are millions of little problems.

How can these millions of little problems which cause anxiety, which cause worry, which cause stress and many other things be eliminated? Can they be eliminated by a psychological approach, by a thorough cleansing, or by a thorough analysis of a psychotherapist or a psychiatrist? Or is it only possible that you change your philosophy, your ideology? Your way of looking at those things, your angle of perception. How to do it? That is the sadhana of the karma sannyasin.

A karma sannyasin is primarily a jnana yogi. Do you know what jnana yoga is? Hatha yoga, raja yoga, bhakti yoga, karma yoga and other yogas are external yogas. I am not saying anything against them. Don't think that I'm speaking of them as inferior. They are external yogas. They involve buddhi, the mind and body.

Jnana yoga is *antaranga yoga*, internal yoga. In which there is an inquest. This inquest is 'who am I?' Now, 'who am I?' is a fundamental question that a karma sannyasin asks at the beginning of spiritual craving. In this process

of 'who am I?' in this process of self-investigation, one comes to realize many things. One realizes that one is a body. Then one realizes that one not only has a body, but a body with a very intricate system inside: the prana, the hormones, the nervous system and many other things. Then one realizes that one has a mind and one has emotions. Then one realizes that one has buddhi, that one has ego. While one is realizing that one has this and that, one tries to understand each and every thing in greater detail.

Perhaps you say, "I'm not the body." How can you say it? What do you know about the body? What is the body? What is it made up of? Is it made up of sperm and ova? Is it made up of the five elements? Is it made up of some divine essence? You have to analyze this term 'body'. So much so, that one day you will know all about the body in its minutest detail. And then you can say, "I am not the body," because you have been investigating the body. There has to be investigation down to the minutest detail.

In the same way you do it with the mind. What is the mind? You don't even know. So we have to know what the mind is. Is the mind homogeneous? Homogeneous is that which is made up of one thing. So is the mind homogeneous or is it a composition? If the mind is a composition, of what is it made of? What are the elements that go into making the mind? Thought, memory, action? What is the mind made of? Added psychological stuff? Or is it homogeneous? What is that primal, total and absolute element of which the mind is composed of?

In the course of time, as you go on studying and investigating, analyzing and splitting, dissecting and dissecting and dissecting, you realize, "Oh, no. I'm not the mind."

In this way, one goes from the body to the mind, from the mind to the emotions. Then one goes to buddhi, to chitta, the subconscious, then to ahamkara, the unconscious. Then you keep on realizing, "No, I am not this. I am not this." Then, after realizing, "I'm not this," you come to

know that there is a nature, that there is a universal law, a very complicated law. It is a universal law which is keeping these things together, and making them function in time and space. Then we investigate the law of nature, *prakriti*. And finally we realize, “I am not prakriti, I am not even that universal law. Then who am I?”

Now there are two things about it. There is the mistaken notion, “I am pure! I am atma. I am Brahman. I am absolute.” This is intellectual. This pertains to reasoning and to buddhi. This pertains to the lower mind. Now this is called assertion. You should not assert. You should negate. Every negation will become a positive assertion. “I’m not the body. I’m not the senses. I’m not the prana. I’m not the mind. I’m not the psyche. I’m not this. I’m not prakriti.” And so on, in this way. This is called the path of “I’m not this, and not this.” This has to be learned from the guru.

There are a few books which I can suggest in this respect. One is for Western, or rather modern, readers. The books by Swami Sivananda and Swami Vivekananda, the disciple of Paramahansa Ramakrishna, are the easiest. *Vedanta for Beginners* and the *Bhagavad Gita*. There are many translations of the *Bhagavad Gita*. One translation is by Dr Radhakrishnan, who was a professor, head of the department at Cambridge University. He headed the chair for many years. He died as the second president of India. He was a very renowned scholar. His commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* is the best for the modern thinker.

These references which I have given will give you some light into the process of investigation of the self, *atma chintan*, self-investigation.

Karma sannyasis, therefore, bring about a process of detachment within the self. This detachment which I talk about all the time is always misunderstood. You understand me to say that being detached means you don’t love anybody. Detachment does not mean that! Detachment is a philosophy of the mind. You allow the storm to pass, and when the storm comes, you bend a little low, like a blade of grass, not

like the oak tree. You bend a little low, the storm passes, then you hold your head high once again. Whenever the emotional turmoil comes, whenever there is anxiety, stress and difficulties do not become neurotic about it. You must learn how to detach yourself. And this detachment does not come by auto-suggestion. This detachment will come to you when you practise this self-analysis for some time: 'I'm not the body, I'm not the mind'.

This is the karma sannyasin's sadhana, which one can do at home, thereby fulfilling the demands of one's natural life, and at the same time completing the spiritual mission of one's life.

Do we have past lives, and how should we best understand and deal with this sort of karma?

Well, this is the sort of question which needs a lot of investigation with one's own self. There are theories about this. Research is being conducted in different areas of science, particularly in parapsychology. If you think about the laws of nature, then you come to a conclusion that the present form of matter is a continuity of a previous form. Therefore, this continuity itself is linked with one's past life. The past does not merely belong to human beings. The past does not merely belong to animals and creatures. The past belongs to every item and object in nature, including vegetables.

If we discuss these forces of nature from the human point of view, then we get into the problem of past lives, reincarnation, transmigration and many dogmas. There is no way for anyone to know the extent of life, the extent of matter in the past as well as in the future. We may study the laws of nature, how they change and how they continue. We may study how, in the course of millions of years, these variations form different things. We may study how different forces in nature radiate, how they are transformed and how they are restructured. As we study, we will come to understand the basic theory about the continuity of matter,

the continuity of action, the continuity of an idea or the continuity of some thing.

It is easier to say that there is no past life or future life. Perhaps the people who don't want to work hard, they will say this. It is easier to say there is a past life and there is a future life. This is also said by those people who don't want to work; they just want an easy solution. They just want to say this and that, and keep quiet, lazy intellectuals. You are not willing to go to the base. Human beings are not the only matter in nature's creation. The human being is a tiny creation in the fable of life. There are many, many more things we know nothing about.

We have the capacity of thinking, of questioning and presenting a problem. The problem may be real or may not be real. That doesn't even matter, but the solution does not lie in involving ourselves only with the question. You see what happens to fruit trees? What happens to flowers? What happens to grains and cereals? What happens to the grass? What happens to the seeds? What happens to the coriander seed? What happens to the hybrid forms? You see how the molecular structure, the same structure, continues?

Why does it not come to an abrupt end? Then, after a few years, after I die, I shall not exist. It is a logical fallacy. How can you say it? How can you say that you will die with death? How can you say that you will be destroyed with death and that death is the conclusion of the chapter of your experience? That you shall never experience this world, this life, anymore? How sad! How pessimistic! How frightening! It is very surprising to me when anybody tells me that you shall not experience this life anymore. I don't accept it because for me life is an open beauty. Life to me is an open challenge. Life to me is something rare, I can grab as many things as possible. In this life I have become a sannyasin. In my next I may become the prime minister of England, watch for it! Or I may become the Queen of England. Why not? Why not? I have immense chances of growth. Yes, immense chances of growth. I will not die and you shall not die. This is not the

first time I am born. I don't believe this. A man who can see so much, a man who can analyze so much, a man who has got the understanding of himself and of so many things, who understands love and passion, hatred and fear. How can you say that this man is a baby in this universe? Can one learn that in sixty years?

Consciousness is the most important thing which is involved in the process of evolution. I'm not using the word transmigration, please note! I'm not using the word transmigration or incarnation. I'm using the word evolution. Consciousness is the subject matter of the topic of evolution.

Who evolves? Does evolution belong to an independent matter, to an independent item? How can you say it? Evolution is a continuity of a process of becoming, of changing and transforming. Therefore, evolution must belong to the same, the previous, the same item.

I was a baby. I was a child. I was a young man. I am the same. This is called evolution. How can you say that every baby who was something, is someone else? As a child, you're someone else? As a young adult, you're someone else?

How can you talk about my past and, at the same time, talk about my growth and evolution? No, growth and evolution will suppose one substance, and if there is anything that is true, if there is anything true about evolution in nature, about evolution in spiritual consciousness, it is that there is a great past before you, which you carry with you. And there is an immense future which is open to you. Tap it! Tap it!

I am telling you the truth. I am not speaking to you of dogma. If you don't believe it, find out for yourself.

Hari Om Tat Sat



Tantra 2

10 March 1985, London

It is necessary for all of us to understand that the tantric system is a complete system in itself. Here we are dealing only with tantric meditation. The tantric philosophy does not think that tantric meditation can be practised. Tantric meditation should be experienced. It has to be experienced.

Therefore, it is important for all of us to understand how a practitioner develops his practices, which, in the course of time, develop into full-fledged meditation spontaneously.

A person who is working hard throughout the day automatically experiences sound sleep at night without any tranquillizer or sleeping pill. In the same way, when certain conditions related to the body and mind are fulfilled by certain practices for a prolonged period, then the experience of meditation automatically dawns.

If you care to study, the system of tantra is classified into various branches. Some of the practices are done alone. You do your practice in the morning, at night or during the day. Certain practices have to be done with your partner. Certain practices of tantra have to be done in the guru's presence. These practices can also be done, according to the quality of the pupil, at different places. They are called places of practice. Of course, these conditions are not practical today. Practising in lonely forests, practising in the place where the dead are disposed of are such places.

Before the actual practice begins, the entire ritual follows with the series of purification called *shuddhi*. I spoke to you yesterday about tattwa shuddhi, purification of the elemental constitution of the personality. In the same way there are processes of purification of various parts of your personality. Because you must accept that you are not only the external physical body, the hands, feet, nose, eyes, and so on. There are many forces which relate and coordinate with each other within your body, such as prana, hormones, endocrine secretions, impulses of the nervous system, central nervous system, autonomic nervous system, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, so on and so forth. All these things constitute your physical body which lives, which moves, which acts. This physical body in its various levels, in its various compartments, has to be purified.

What are those methods of purification, when should they be done and how should they be done? In hatha yoga there is a pranayama known as nadi shodhana. Unhappily and unfortunately, it has been translated as 'easy pranayama'. It is not easy pranayama. Don't try to make things so easy. Keep them academic, keep them clinical, keep them technical. Don't try to simplify technological things. *Shodhana* means the act of purification. *Nadi*, in this respect, means nerves. By nerves, we mean the nervous system, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, which need correction, which need balance, which need a proper metabolism.

In the tantric system certain practices of purification are practised in the beginning, but later on there is an important practice called anga nyasa, kara nyasa, mantra nyasa. This is a very important part of tantric practices and it is from this practice that I have developed the system of yoga nidra. Yoga nidra is not a complete tantric system. I have modernized it. In this anga nyasa, when you have done all the preliminary purification rituals in the morning, then you do the purification of different interior parts of the body with the help of the mantra. These mantras are just sounds. These

sounds are identified with and impressed on a particular or a definite part of the body. It is said that each and every part of the body has a place, has a sound. We are not talking about external sounds which we produce every day. We are talking about sound as a principle, the primordial principle. We are talking about a sound as the primordial principle related to the process of creativity.

This sound is called nada. *Nada* means vibration. In English it is translated as sound, but nada literally means vibration. Anything which is in constant vibration is called nada. Therefore, this nada, which is in the state of constant vibration in the universe, is a principle which is related to the process of creation. I mean creation, not only of the earth, not only of the planets that are known to us, not only of the galaxies we have heard about. There are creations which we don't even see.

There are levels of the mind with which you can see other creation. You may not be able to see this creation, which you see with this mind, and these eyes, and with this perception. This sound vibration has a distinct, a definite, a particular place in your physical body: in the little finger, the middle finger, the index finger, thumb, and so on. When you evoke a sound at that particular part of the body, say, *Um* or *Kam*, or whatever the sound may be for that particular part of the body, it starts vibrating, and that is called the act of purification with the help of mantra. This act of purification with the help of mantra is a very simple process. Although, of course, in yoga nidra I have made it look very simple: thumb, second finger, third finger, fourth finger, and so on.

In the future I would like to teach yoga nidra in a different style. Rather than telling you, "right hand thumb, second finger, third finger . . ." I would say, "*Am, Aam, Ing, In, Um . . .*" It would be much better, but it will wait.

These acts of purification create a balance between the different nervous systems in the body. These two nervous systems, as you know, are known to us as sympathetic and parasympathetic, but in tantra they are known as *ida nadi*

and *pingala nadi*. Ida nadi is considered the feminine aspect. Pingala nadi is considered the masculine aspect.

Ida represents consciousness, the mind, from which desires, passions emanate. Reason follows which is called the mind or *chitta*. Ida nadi represents the whole department of the mind, functioning in your body as it is linked with your personality.

Pingala nadi represents prana. *Prana* means life force. Through which your eyes work, excretion takes place, birth takes place. Respiration, expiration, movement and other sensorial activities take place. If the prana is not there, then these activities will not take place. Prana is the life force, represented by pingala nadi. These two nadis, ida and pingala, are distributed throughout the body in the form of energy.

Let me explain to you the literal meaning of the word nadi. Nadi is very difficult to write in Roman. You have to write nadhi, or you have to write nari. But don't say nari, don't say nadi. Say a combination of the sounds r and d. *Nadi* means flow. It doesn't mean nerves, but we understand it by the word nerves. It's a flow. What does the word flow indicate? Here flow indicates the flow of energy. We are not talking about the gross. We are not talking about the nerve which is the basis. We are not talking about an insulating cable. We are not talking about the copper wire inside the cable. We are not talking about the aluminium wire inside the cable. We are talking about the flow which flows within the copper wire. What is that flow? That flow is called energy, but energy is an expression which can mean anything.

In tantra they use the word shakti. What does shakti mean? Does shakti mean a female? Or does shakti mean a moving force? If it is a moving force, what does it move? Does it move an object? Does it move an idea? Does it move knowledge? Does it move an experience? Does it move anything else? What is energy? In tantra they have made it very clear that within these branches of the nerves, within the physical body, there is an amount of energy, of force, which

flows, and it does! It can be scientifically proved and it has been proved.

This flow of energy in kundalini yoga, in tantra, is talked about in the beginning as being twofold. One form of energy relates to the mental activities, the mental personality, and mental performances. Therefore, they control, or they direct, or they inspire the *jnanendriyas*. The *jnanendriyas* pertain to the sensorial knowledge, like sound, touch, taste, perception, smell. These are *jnanendriyas*, the senses through which you become aware of certain perceptions. The mind energy in ida is responsible for that. That is the function of that energy and nothing else.

If there is any difficulty or any disturbance, if there is wrong conduction of this energy, then there is going to be a problem. If the negative gets into the positive and the positive gets into the negative, you know what happens.

Ida nadi represents the negative pole of energy. For the time being, let me explain it like this, but don't take it exactly as I am telling you because this is just an explanation. Ida nadi is the negative pole of energy or force in the body. Wherever it is, it is responsible for the conduction of finer perceptions. It can't create what we call mobility. It can't create an action. It can't create secretions. No, it can only create perception and knowledge. That is called ida nadi.

Pingala nadi is the positive pole of this force. This is also distributed, penetrating, interpenetrating throughout the body. It is in every part of the body, not merely in the liver or the heart, but everywhere. It is everywhere, involving millions and millions of circuits. 72,000 circuits converge in the heart. Of course, if you want to study cardiology, it would be much better to make a comparison between these two concepts, between the yogic and tantric and the modern scientific concept. You will find a similarity, if not absolute, then close to each other.

There is always an imbalance between these two forces in everyone's physical body. Sometimes pingala is predominant and ida is subservient, or ida is predominant

and pingala is subservient. This imbalance is the natural behaviour of the body, the natural behaviour of nature. It is through this imbalance, to some extent, that we are able to operate normally in this physical body. Thinking – acting, acting – thinking, thinking – acting, acting – thinking. If there is absolute equanimity or absolute equilibrium between these two nadis, there is going to be a problem. This problem is a crisis I'm going to tell you about.

When there is equilibrium between these two forces in the physical body, which you can achieve either through pranayama, shatkarmas, bandhas or by any other means which your guru or teacher has taught you, then there is an awakening of a third energy force. It is called *sushumna*, the autonomic nervous system. This particular sushumna nadi does not operate. It remains dormant. It is always in a state of rest. As long as ida and pingala nadi are functioning, and thereby the mind and prana are functioning, it will not work. Where there is balance, at once, an awakening of the sushumna nadi takes place.

The purpose of all yoga is to awaken the sushumna nadi. Remember it. Whether it is hatha yoga, raja yoga, karma yoga, bhakti yoga or any yoga, the first purpose of any yoga, or any system for that matter, is to awaken the sushumna nadi. Within a split second the awakening of the sushumna nadi transforms you from this earthly awareness to a little different awareness. You begin to feel different and you have classical, undefinable experiences which cannot be properly explained, such as seeing or perceiving fire at the bottom of the spine, experiencing scorching and burning heat, the movement of some creature, the movement of some worm through the spinal passage as though something is crawling upward. These experiences which I am explaining to you have already been described in books on tantra and books on kundalini yoga by many great people and professors. Buddha has also described it. In the Bible there are also descriptions. In many other books there are descriptions.

You see things which relate to some other time and to some other space. You experience things which relate to a particular time already gone or which is about to come. Your consciousness is able to relate to people who are not here, but who have lived here or shall live here in the future because, after all, it is the tuning of the consciousness which connects you to a particular frequency in creation.

How do you tune your radio and television? You tune from BBC 1 to BBC 2 and the program changes. If you tune to ITV at once the program changes, because the frequencies change and the relay system changes. In exactly the same way, when the consciousness alters, the frequency of the experience also changes.

Which is the real experience? This is something the wise have been debating for many thousands of years. In India the wise have been debating, "Which is the real experience?" Is the waking experience real and absolute, real meaning absolute, or is the dream experience real and absolute, or is the experience in deep meditation, where you see many things, real?

There has to be some experience which should be the basis of all experiences. That experience which is the basis of all other experiences should be an absolute experience. It should not be an experience relative to time and space, and the condition of your mind. If you take a lot of drugs, then you have some other experience, because your experience is influenced by a drug. Your experience, your mind has altered because of the influence of the drug. Therefore, this experience cannot be considered an absolute experience.

These debates on absolute experience have been going on, and this is something which you must keep in mind. You should not come to a sudden conclusion, but this particular state of experience in which we depend on the senses and the mind, buddhi, definitely cannot be, and is not, an absolute state of experience.

It is not the basic experience. It is not the experience which is the substratum of all other experiences. No. It is

not. Logically it is not. By experiment it is not. But then, what is the absolute experience? It is for this purpose that awakening of sushumna has to take place.

You cannot find the answer through the intellect. You cannot find the answer through reasoning. You cannot find the answer through logic.

For over thousands of years two systems have been developing, almost side by side, in this world. One system is the system of the Greek philosophical thinking. Another system is the system of the ancient Hindu thinking of the Vedas and Upanishads. These two systems have grown within their own systems.

The Greek thinkers thought that it is through the mind, through reason, through understanding of matter, and by analysis, that we can understand the object, matter, reality and come to an ultimate conclusion. That is what they thought about and for those who did not accept it – they were finished. Socrates was one of them, because he said, “Know thyself.” He did not say, “Know thy mind.” He did not say, “Know the matter through the mind.” “Know the matter through reasoning.” No. He said, “Know thyself.” What happened to Socrates is something which is well known, though you may not have known why.

The Hindus always had one point. They said that through the mind the experience cannot be absolute because the tool of experience itself is limited. The mind has got its own faults. The mind has got its own limitations. It is limited by categories. The mind is limited by habits. The mind is limited by personality. Your mind is limited by your own karma.

How can you say that the conclusion about the absolute arrived at by your mind is true? First of all, it is necessary that you will have to change the structure of your mind. Unless you are able to change the basic structure of the mind, the total structure of the mind, experience will not take place, it cannot take place and truth cannot be apprehended. Truth does not belong to reasoning. Truth does not belong to speech, talking all the time, gossiping. I can talk about the

truth for ages. You can hear about the absolute experience for ages, but it means nothing. It is like writing 'water, water, water' on a piece of paper 20,000 times, but when you are thirsty, does it help you? Even if you squeeze it?! No, it doesn't help you!

Therefore, it is said in tantra, and it is the basic concept of tantra, you must awaken sushumna. By the awakening of sushumna, the state of mind will alter. That state of mind which will alter will not be the absolute state of mind, but it will be a superior, more dependable and more progressive state of mind, which will be closer to your intuition, closer to the subtler processes of reality which you can't otherwise see.

The sushumna nadi has to do more with the chakras. We cannot ignore chakras when we are talking about tantric meditation. As I told you on the very first day, tantric meditation is not sitting in the lotus pose and closing the eyes and closing the mind, locking it up, suffocating it, and subjugating it. No, no, no. Tantric meditation is a process of free flow. Your eyes may be open, yet you are elsewhere. Therefore, the chakras cannot be ignored. These chakras are the junction points which are situated within the framework of the spine and are related to different areas of the body.

First of all, they are linked with different areas of the body. Then they are linked with different areas of your consciousness in your *sukshma sharira*, subtle body. Then they are linked with your causal body. It is not an easy affair to contact consciousness directly. There are levels and levels of consciousness. So you have to purify the chakras. In order to purify the chakras you can practise pranayama. The practices of a few asanas, not many, will help you even more so, because a few asanas are linked with the development and purification of the chakras. Just as when a wheel doesn't work, you put in a little lubrication. Lubricate the wheel and it begins to move. You have to lubricate the chakras, so to speak, with asanas.

Chakra means a circle, a wheel, but in this case the chakra means a mandala. Mandala is something known to

all cultures throughout the world. You give a child a drawing pad and some pencils. The first thing he will draw will be the mandala, not with an exact circle because he may not be able to do so. He won't draw a line, he always draws mandalas because that is so natural to a child. A mandala is something on which every structure is built, on which every house is built, every window, every table, everything. The basis is the mandala. Mandala and chakra are the same.

How the energy flows through these chakras, when it goes to different parts of the body, depends upon how much blockage is in the chakra, as well as in the nadi. Chakras are also blocked. Chakras do not function as you may have read in books. It is with the processes of kundalini yoga that mooladhara chakra comes into activity, then swadhisthana, then manipura, and so on.

How to awaken the chakras? How to make these chakras able to pass on the energy or the forces more efficiently to different areas of the body, to the mind and buddhi and consciousness?

I have written in great detail about the meditations which one should do on various chakras. The name of the book is *Kundalini Tantra*. It is not a very classical book on kundalini tantra. It is a very simple and practical book. If you want your swadhisthana chakra to begin to function, because you find some sort of blockage there, or if you feel that your manipura chakra needs a little bit of opening and free movement, you have to lubricate it. How to do it?

The systems of meditation, the systems of concentration, the systems of pranayama, the systems of mudra and bandha, must be coordinated according to necessity. A coordinated effort should be made to bring the chakra into complete operation.

These chakras, of course, cannot be seen in the physical body and it would not be wise to search for a scientific explanation. There are many people who have done so. One of my friends, a doctor, asked me once why, when he did surgery, he did not find the chakras? Do you know what reply

I gave him? “Once I also opened the transistor but I did not find any song in there.” Well, that was just a humorous way to put him down.

The fact is that in Japan, one of our very good friends, one of my devotees, has done a good job on this. His name is Dr Hiroshi Motoyama. He primarily worked on acupuncture. He established a research centre in order to prove these energy points. If you put a needle here, what happens there? I like that.

Finally, when he read my books, it became a very great revelation to him. He began to realize things. He thought it would be wise for him to understand these things. So he improvised a scientific instrument. You know what its name is? I hope you remember it! Its name is chakra machine! It is not as ordinary as the name indicates, nor is it as complicated as the name indicates. It is like an electroencephalogram, which registers the brainwaves, alpha, gamma, and so on.

When you are practising bhastrika pranayama, maybe two hundred times, what is happening? Something is happening. Something must be happening either in the brain or in the circulation. Somewhere, something must be happening. Yes. It is happening, but is something happening to the sushumna nadi? Is something happening to ida nadi? Is something happening to pingala nadi? Or is something happening to the plexuses, cardiac plexus, solar plexus or cervical plexus?

Dr Motoyama has come to certain positive, but of course not final, conclusions. He has spotted, he has located, and he has observed the effects taking place.

I'll give you an example. I went to Japan and met him in 1982 on my way to America. He showed me a video. The person was a young woman, she was isolated in a chamber, and electrodes were affixed. It was scientific because he has a very good lab. A camera was fixed at a certain angle and it could focus itself only from the navel centre to the coccyx centre, four or five inches, no more than that. The room was

quite dark. The young woman was there and was practising bhastrika, kapalbhati and many other things.

While she was doing these things, something must have been happening. Those happenings were recorded in another room, through a computer, in the chakra machine. What is very surprising is that something was happening in the camera also. What was happening in the camera, I saw later on the screen. For about ten minutes there was nothing but absolute darkness. The room was dark and the young woman could not be seen through the lenses of the camera. It was totally, absolutely dark.

After about fifteen minutes a small light, like a little glow worm, one little light began to rise from the bottom. I saw it, on the screen, on the film. It was not round shaped, it was not a properly shaped light. Sometimes it would become very tiny, sometimes slightly bigger. It did not go straight up. Sometimes it travelled left, sometimes right, sometimes a little bit up, right and left. Erratic movement of ascendance, I call it. Erratic ascending and descending, it came up, went down, came up, and went down. The ascending and descending of that light continued for about ten minutes until her pranayama session was completed.

Can you believe that during the practices of pranayama something can happen in your spine and that an ordinary camera is able to register it? From this we conclude that when we do these practices and the things begin to happen correctly then, not only a subjective, but an objective force also comes into the level of creation. An objective force comes into the level of creation.

When this force comes into the objective level then you can see it. If you were in that room at that time with the young woman, with no camera, just looking at her back from behind, maybe you could also have seen the light a little bit. Yes, because it was objective. It could be seen. Such experiments I hope will be repeated more and more often. That young woman must be very special, have a very special state of mind. She was American, she was very

enthusiastic, and had practised yoga, pranayama for a long, long time.

This chakra machine which he devised is a very sophisticated scientific instrument, through which he has always been trying to understand the effects of certain practices on each and every chakra. We have no knowledge about it. If you are practising moola bandha, for example, what happens and where? We definitely conclude that something must be happening somewhere, but that is not enough for science. That is not enough for us. For yogis, for those people who are dedicated to the process of awakening, to the process of understanding the laws of nature, we must know what is happening and where, when we are practising moola bandha.

You must always relate the physical body with the subtle body, with the causal body, with the other bodies. You should not exclude the physical body, such as the spine, the head, the brain. You should not exclude this from the higher bodies. Of course, in an absolute analysis this physical body may not be the ultimate form of existence. That does not matter. This physical body, in my opinion, is the substratum, is the springboard from where we can take a jump.

Therefore, when you are talking about forces, when you are talking about energy, you will have to talk about the chakras and the nadis. When you are talking about the chakras and the nadis, you will have to talk about them in relation to the spinal cord, in relation to the sympathetic and the parasympathetic nervous system, and in relation to the brain. When you correlate this, then your scientific approach to tantric meditation will be complete.

In tantric meditation, practices must be organized: purification of the body, then purification of the chakras, then awakening of sushumna. When this is established, then awakening of kundalini takes place.

Awakening of kundalini takes place by crude methods and by refined methods. It is not the first time that we are awakening kundalini. For centuries, for thousands of

years, primitive tribes, many illiterate peoples who were not educated in Oxford, Cambridge and Harvard, had awakened kundalini. It has nothing to do with university degrees. It has nothing to do with class, clan, nation, caste, creed or worth. It is something which is inherent within each and everybody, but it seems to be closed. There seems to be a very hard shell outside it. It has to be broken!

Therefore, the tantric systems of meditation must be properly studied and must be understood. I have spoken to you only a little about tantric systems. There are many sides of tantra and tantric meditation which are very interesting.

The last word is: when you are serious about these things, always have yourself linked with a guru. I am not talking about your yoga teacher. Be linked to a guru. That guru has to be a living person with whom sometimes you can talk, who you can listen to, who you can tell the things you do not understand.

Hari Om Tat Sat



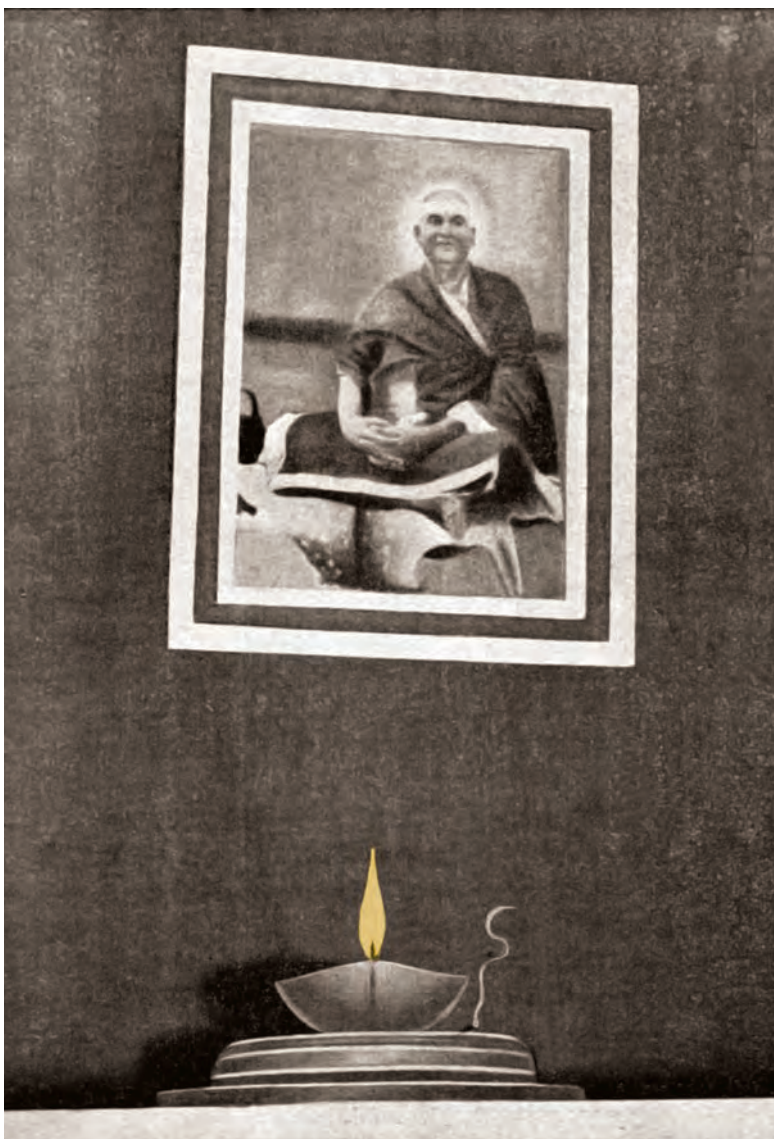
Nada Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

The 'Yoga Weekly Get-Together Society', Muzaffarpur, Bihar, published this series of lectures delivered by Swami Satyananda to the students of the first International Yoga Teachers Training Course in Munger, 1967–1968. This souvenir volume, *Nada Yoga*, was released on the occasion of this Interstate Yoga Seminar in Muzaffarpur.



SYMBOLS OF LIFE AND LIGHT OF OUR MISSION
Swami Sivananda and the Akhanda Jyoti

Foreword

India has a rich heritage of its proud culture from the past. This nation is credited with having experimented in different ways on how to make life happier and even achieve salvation. On their realizing truth, a well-planned way of life was prescribed by our maharishis and rishis, and we followed the same with complete faith in the past. After a lapse of thousands of years, we became inactive and indifferent to our culture, so much that our spiritual leaders who used to direct our activities, through their invisible superpowers by residing physically on the tops of the Himalayas, had to come down to the plains to revitalize our sacred Indian way of life. The present volume of the souvenir, published on the occasion of this Interstate Yoga Seminar in Muzaffarpur, also owes its publication, as a gift, to such a spiritual guide, Swami Satyananda Saraswati, who after completing his initial training in yoga at the feet of his renowned spiritual guru Brahmaleen Swami Sivananda, preferred to launch a mass movement to acquaint the present generation with yoga.

At Bihar School of Yoga in Munger, founded in 1964, a large number of yoga teachers from different countries of the world have been trained for spreading yoga far and wide. There are millions and millions of inquisitive persons who are curious to know, to understand and practise yoga, but who find themselves so handicapped for want of easily

understandable books in common languages like English and Hindi.

The present volume is in the same series of published literatures which have solved the problem to a great extent. In the past *Mechanism of Meditation*, *Dynamics of Yoga*, *Taming the Kundalini*, *Gita Tattwa Darshan* and *Antar Mouna* have been published only to pave ways for the beginners.

While going through pages of this volume the readers will get the lucid expression of ways and means to realize God through the process of nada yoga. For the realization of God, concentration of the mind is absolutely essential, and to obtain this concentration, there are detailed processes of which nada yoga is one. To realize God, self-control is needed, which is possible with the sadhana of jnana yoga.

One feels the outer world with the help of one's five senses: the eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. So long as one's attention is diverted to this outer world, one is not in a position to concentrate properly. But the moment one draws one's attention from outside and engages in the inner world one is on the way to full concentration.

In that process, one hears *anahada nada*, the real sound of the inner world, in sixteen different processes and gradually these sounds become thinner and thinner and ultimately die. This very sadhana is called nada yoga.

In the second part of the volume there is a detailed description of yoga nidra, a sadhana of happy relaxation of yoga sadhakas. This process helps one to relax completely and fully regain the energies lost either for material or spiritual advantage.

Swami Satyananda Saraswati who made this work possible, really has the full blessings of the Almighty. In this period of the world's history it seems the outlook of the majority of human beings is changing. Everyone is fed up with the material and baneful effects of scientific advancement. The real remedy is the scientific study and practice of yoga which will keep our body and mind in

perfect condition to take full advantage of the material advancement for those who are poor and needy, and less developed, without any attachment in the true spiritual sense. Then we will enjoy the real pleasure of self-realization which will not only give us true joy and relaxation, but which will also make us *jivanmukta*, liberated while in the body, the ultimate of human life.

Hari Om Tat Sat

—26 February 1968, Sivaratri,
Proffessor Kedar Nath Prasad, Muzaffarpur, Bihar



Introduction

अज्ञान तिमिरान्धस्य ज्ञानान्जन शलाकया ।
चक्षुरून्मीलितम् येन तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

We first pay homage to our guru, who has shown us the light and taught the different methods to proceed on the path of self-realization.

Life is short. Time is fleeting. The world is full of miseries. The goal of life is self-realization. Every man wants happiness. The happiness obtained from the sensual objects is fleeting and transitory, which results in severe exertion, sin, fear, pain and worries. Real happiness can only be attained by self-realization.

There are several paths for it to suit people of different temperaments. They all lead to the same goal, the attainment of the ultimate reality. Some of them are termed as karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnana yoga, raja yoga, laya yoga.

The present book is a collection of speeches, delivered by Paramahansa Satyananda Saraswati, to the aspirants of the First International Yoga Teachers' Training Course in Munger, India. This deals with the practice of nada yoga, which is one of the sadhanas of laya yoga.

Ancient Indian yogic culture has won the respect of foreigners of several countries in the East and West. Now, Indians have also realized its utility. As students of yoga we

have learnt several yogic practices under the able guidance of the world-famous great yogi, our gurudeva.

We have realized that yoga and particularly nada yoga has a great promise for the man of the world in anarchy. The yoga system can easily and definitely lead a person to physical, mental and spiritual equilibrium and equanimity. Yoga can open new horizons of spiritual illumination in man's life.

This small book will throw much light on the importance and usefulness of nada yoga. It is a very interesting, inspiring, revitalizing and relaxing sadhana. In the course of this sadhana, you will hear very pleasing and inspiring sounds not from the outside but from within. This will make you realize that the fountain of joy is not outside, but it is within yourself.

There are many sects in India which practise nada yoga sadhanas, such as Radha Swami, Kabirpanthi, Muslim fakirs, mystics. The Bible says it is the 'word from God'. Many scriptures have praised the importance of nada yoga sadhanas like *Nada Bindu Upanishad*, *Dhyana Bindu Upanishad*, *Yagyavalkya Samita*, *Shiva Mahapurana*, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* of Swami Swatmarama Yogi and others. Some of the slokas of these scriptures are as under:

सर्वचिन्तां समुत्सृज्य सर्व चेष्टा विवर्जितः ।
नाद मेवानुसन्दध्यान्नादे चित्तं विलीयते ॥ 42 ॥

Nada Bindu Upanishad

अनाहतं तु यच्छब्दं तस्य शब्दस्य यत्परम् ।
तत्परं विदन्ते यस्तु स योगी छिन्न संशय ॥

Dhyana Bindu Upanishad

वीणावादन तत्त्वज्ञः श्रुति जाति विशारदः ।
तालज्ञश्चाप्रयासेन मोक्षमार्गं स गच्छति ॥

Yagyavalkya Samita

अभ्यस्यमानो नादोऽयम् बाह्यमावृणुते ध्वनिम् ।
पक्षाद्विक्षेपमखिलं जित्वा योगी सुखा भवेत् ॥ 83 ॥

Hatha Yoga Pradipika

न शृणोति यदा शृज्वन्योमाभ्यासेन देविके ।
प्रियतेभ्यसमानस्तु योगी तिष्ठेछिवानिशम् ॥ 42 ॥
तस्मादुत्पद्ये शब्दा मृत्युजित्सप्तमिर्छिनैः ।

Shiva Mahapurana

It is such an inspiring sadhana that when one takes up this path then one does not like to miss it. If this small book will inspire and encourage the readers and aspirants, even to a little extent, to go deep into this science for research and practice we will feel our purpose is fulfilled.

May God bless upon you, the inner strength to control the indriyas and the mind for performing this sadhana, so that you may have unshakable faith in the miraculous powers and marvellous benefits of nada yoga. May God bless you with the opportunity of nada yogic sadhana to reveal the deepest secrets of your personality and to achieve the fountain of joy within yourself.

Hari Om Tat Sat

—Editors

Music has an intimate relationship with human beings. It has a direct connection with our state of mind and so much power that it can free the ego. Whether you sing God's name through kirtan or just produce musical notes, the sounds will go to the brain directly and alter the brain waves. Wherever there is a connection with spirituality, music has been emphasized.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Nada Yoga

Introduction

Any practice or technique of meditation that brings about complete cessation of consciousness is called *laya yoga*. There are many sadhanas recommended in laya yoga and nada yoga is one of the sadhanas of laya yoga. It should not be understood that nada yoga is the only practice of laya yoga. Even the practices of antar mouna are capable of leading the consciousness to a state of total suspension. The great authors of hatha yoga of the past, like Rishi Gheranda and others have also maintained that the practices of hatha yoga can also be treated as a part of laya yoga. Practices of pranayama can be used for achieving a mental state full of consciousness. Therefore, nada yoga is only one practice among many in the scheme of laya yoga. The first exponent of this yoga is Lord Shiva.

Definition

The word nada is derived from the original Sanskrit root nad (नद्). *Nad* means to flow. Hence, the etymological meaning of *nada* should be a process or a flow of consciousness. Ordinarily, the word nada means sound.

Different stages of nada

There are four stages of manifestation of sound according to its frequency, subtlety and grossness. The four stages are: (i)

para, (ii) pashyanti, (iii) madhyama and (iv) vaikhari. These four stages of sound should be understood scientifically.

Para nada

The transcendental sound which has the highest rate of frequency is known as para. It is beyond the reach of the *indriyas*, sense organs, and the mind and other means of cognition. *Para* means transcendental, beyond or the other side. Hence, *para nada* means the transcendental sound. It is indicative of a truth that there is a sphere of superconsciousness where sound is heard in different dimensions.

Students of classical music are aware of the fact that every note contains fluctuating numbers of vibrations per second. They vary in length, speed and pitch. The exact data of these subjects can be obtained from the machine that records the sound waves. Sound vibrates per second. The vibrations in Indian music are called *andolana*. Per second, a sound may make many thousands of vibrations. After a certain number of high frequency per second, sound becomes inaudible and can only be perceived subjectively. The ears cannot receive such sounds which are vibrating at a very high rate. Therefore, we are not aware of all the sounds that are present in the cosmos. Sounds having rhythms of a very high frequency are transformed into silence. Beyond a certain limit, the ears prove their incapability. No one can decipher or understand that sound even if it is present or produced.

Para or the transcendental sound is one which has the highest vibrational frequency. Intense vibrational faculty makes para inaudible. Various texts mention that the para sound has no vibrations. It is a sound which has no movements and frequencies. It is a still sound, but we cannot conceive of a sound which has no movements, no motion and no vibrations. When a sound goes to its maximum pitch, it attains a sudden stillness and that is para nada.

In the Upanishads, the sound of *Om* is supposed to be the manifestation of para. The audible chant of *Om*, which

we produce, is not para because it is subject to our hearing, understanding and logic. Therefore, audible *Om* cannot be called the transcendental one. However, para is a cosmic and a transcendental sound devoid of all movements. It is still and infinite both. It has shape and light too. Its nature is *jyoti*, light. It is different from the sounds usually conceived or heard. The Upanishads clearly state, “That is *Om*, that sound is *Om*.”

Pashyanti

The second stage of sound, which has less frequency and more grossness than the para, is pashyanti. It is subtler than madhyama, but it is a sound which can only be seen and not heard. *Pashyanti* in Sanskrit means ‘that which can be seen or visualized’. The ancient scriptures maintain that sound can also be perceived. How does one see a sound? Well, have you ever heard a piece of music in a dream? This particular dimension of sound, as it is in dream, is called pashyanti. It may be called a mental sound, which is neither a conscious nor a semiconscious sound. It is a subconscious sound, pertaining to a quality of your mind and not belonging to the quality of your sense organs like the tongue, teeth, throat or mouth.

When I say loudly, *Ram, Ram, Ram, Ram*, it will be called vaikhari, but when I close my eyes and mouth and go in, and repeat mentally the sound of *Ram, Ram, Ram*, visualizing its colour and form with the inner eye, it is known as pashyanti. When the word or the sound is heard in a sphere where one is not aware of the outer surroundings, it is called pashyanti. When every outer sound is extinct and you hear a new sound altogether, unlike the nature of other audible sounds, know it as a special sound or the nada of pashyanti.

Madhyama

Madhyama is known as a sound having less frequencies than the para and pashyanti, but subtler than the vaikhari form of sound. While vaikhari will be the grossest manifestation of

sound, madhyama will be subtler than vaikhari. Madhyama is a sound produced by whispering. No audible effect is produced in it. Madhyama produces very minute vibrations in the act of a whisper. In an ordinary sound, two objects strike against each other in order to produce sound, but in madhyama no two things strike violently so as to produce audible sound. For example, when a sound is produced like ‘thuck, thuck, thuck, thuck’, it is termed a gross sound. Madhyama means a middle sound. The word *madhyama* means ‘in between’ or ‘middle’. The sound may be termed whispering or the sound of a whisper.

Vaikhari

The fourth and gross stage of nada is supposed to be vaikhari. The vaikhari sound is audible and producible. The spoken sound is vaikhari. It is produced by friction or by striking two things against each other. Its vibrational frequencies are conducted within a certain range.

To sum up, para is the quality of the soul, pashyanti is the mental or inner sound, madhyama is the subtler quality of the vocal organs and vaikhari is the gross quality of the same physical organs.

The universe and nada

According to nada yogis and the scriptures dealing with the subject of nada yoga, the nada brahma or the ultimate and the transcendental sound is the seed from which the entire creation has evolved. A nada yogi believes that the world is but a projection of sound alone. The whole macrocosmic universe is a projection of sound vibrations. From that sound the whole world has evolved. In the Bible there is a reference, “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God.” This word is called the nada or the shabda. In India the Sufis, a Mohammedan cult, call it surat. Surat or shabda yoga is another name for the nada yoga practice. The Muslim saints of philosophical temperament also believe that out of sound and form the world was evolved. It is believed

by the nada yogis that the five elements, five karmendriyas, five jnanendriyas, the four-fold mind and the three gunas have evolved out of one eternal sound. It means that prakriti and the material, mental, psychic and intellectual universe are an outcome of nada brahma. This is the ultimate belief of all nada yogis. So, a nada yogi believes in a reality which manifested itself in the form of vibrations. These vibrations either do not vibrate at all or vibrate at such a high frequency that it is beyond the reach of the human faculty.

The eternal or original nada has the highest rate of frequencies and vibration. When any object vibrates at a tremendous and unimaginable speed it becomes still. It means that the highest point of motion and vibration is stillness. That sound appears to be the creative principle of all matter and the entire material substance.

It is the contention of nada yogis that everything in the universe originated and evolved from the eternal and infinite nada. In this context a study of the Upanishads is recommended, with special reference to the *Nada Upanishad*, *Bindu Upanishad* and *Hamsopanishad*. There are also various other spiritual cults who have specialized in the science of nada yoga and one such well-known sect in India is Radha Swami.

Music is also a materialized form of nada. The movements of prana in the body are also nothing but the expressions of nada. The purpose of nada yoga sadhana is to find out the primal and the finest, the ultimate and the inner sound, word or shabda.

In order to discover the transcendental and non-empirical sound, the process has to start from the gross. The ultimate form of sound is conceivable only through going into the deeper realms of our consciousness.

The centre of nada

Which is the centre where the transcendental nada is situated? Bhaktas try to find out the centre of their ishta in anahata. Yogis try to find out the centre of intuition in

ajna. Vedantins try to find out the centre of hiranyagarbha in sahasrara. Likewise, nada yogis locate the centre of nada in bindu, which is a familiar centre to the students of this International Yoga Teacher's Training Course.

Bindu is the centre where the continuous, eternal, inaudible, unbroken and unbeaten sound goes on, since when, it is not known. For the purpose of discovery of nada, it is true that the bindu has to be spotted primarily and finally.

Before one ventures to go into the depth of this science, it would be better for the aspirant to locate or discover the mental, astral and psychic nature of the sound of nada. Different practices of nada yoga are introduced in order to help the aspirant to go through the different psychic and non-physical sounds, before the consciousness can finally be attuned with the real nada.

Practice of nada in bhakti yoga

The practices meant for bhakti yoga are also to be included as practices of nada yoga. When a bhakti yogi performs japa of a mantra, in the first stage, he remains aware of the mantra. He tries his best to maintain awareness of the sound produced by the mantra. After getting used to this practice or after having developed a deeper and greater awareness of the sound of the mantra, he stops producing an audible sound vibration and tries to intensify his awareness on the basis of mantra chanted in whispered tones.

In the second stage, he tries to merge or fuse his awareness on whispered mantras. When this task is accomplished satisfactorily, he stops whispering also and tries to chant the same mantra mentally. He tries to hear the mental and subtle notes which, though inaudible, can be visualized through a deeper form of awareness. Sometimes at this stage, there is a possibility of actual experience of hearing the same mantra. The bhakti yogi will have the feeling as if he had really chanted the mantra in an audible tone. When the awareness of mental chanting of mantra is

absorbing and the mind is completely fused in a deep realm of awareness, mantra or nada is transformed into a constant inaudible repetition which will appear to the aspirant on the plane of consciousness as audible, but it will be imperceptible and inaudible to others. This is the way to practise mantra and nada yoga by bhakti yogis.

A few kriyas combined with bandhas and mantras should also be included in order to stimulate the dormant psychic regions of the aspirant. He should begin his task of discovering the first sound or nada by plugging his ears. When his practice is fairly advanced, he need not plug his ears in order to commune with the different dimensions of sound. Instead, he should try to commune with the inner sound during the stillness of the night without closing the ears. It is easy to apprehend the inner sound at midnight.

Diet of a nada yogi

The diet of a nada yogi should be light and easily digestible. Any food that sends quick influxes of blood to the brain is undesirable. Food which causes hypertension, or high blood pressure, should be avoided. Normal nutritional supply required for the maintenance of the normal functioning of the body should be provided.

Music and nada yoga

Music also is nada yoga. In the case of music, nada is rendered absolutely scientific and classical. The development of musical systems in the past was done strictly in accordance with the views of nada yoga sadhanas. The well-known and most ancient *Sama Veda* is always sung with a scientific exactness and in accordance to nada yoga sadhana. Pranayama forms an important preliminary and essential part of this sadhana.

At different stages of conscious awareness, the mind is easily attracted by different waves of nada. Certain vibrations of nada seem to be disagreeable at a particular

time, while some are agreeable at a particular time of the day. Certain combinations of nada are agreeable to some people and disagreeable to others. These nada vibrations in music are known as *raga* or musical notes. A raga having short vibrations is not relished by some. The morning music of India, the Bhairavi or Bhairava raga, is appealing to a few, but not to all. I like the midnight music of India, the Malkos, the Durga or the Jogia ragas. The evening raga, like Bhimpalasi, is also popularly appreciated. Generally, girls and boys of a tender age prefer Bhairavi. This proves that the mind reacts differently to different sound waves.

Music could be taken up as a spiritual practice of sadhana, as a preliminary, or just as a pleasant, interesting and inspiring sadhana of nada yoga, through which the mind could be attuned to the subtlest vibrations before proceeding to discover the last transcendental sound of nada.



Time and Term of Nada Yoga

Time for practice

One can practise nada yoga whenever he is free. A beginner should practise nada yoga between midnight and 2 am. Midnight is the period free from disturbing influences of external sound. Absence of light in the atmosphere also aids the practice. It helps to introvert the mind.

Precautions

Precautions should be born in mind because nada yoga sadhana can produce or bring about manifestation of any sound. Sometimes, when the practitioner has a weak state of brain, he will find his ears buzzing throughout the day. Sometimes he hears the gonging of a bell or various other notes. Thus, in the course of his daily activities, he gets disturbed by these notes ringing all the time in his ears. The manifestation of those different sounds disturbs the peace of the aspirant. If the sound continues to agitate the mind, immediately change the diet and abandon the practice. It is sure and certain that by the practice of nada yoga, inner sounds are developed by stages. They are not heard at any other time during the waking period.

Suppose nada yoga is practised at night and different sounds are heard. The next morning, the aspirant attends the office or class and starts hearing the bell, and wishes to avoid it. He tries, but still hears the buzz. Sometimes he

feels as if bees are humming in the ears. If these symptoms manifest, the nada yoga sadhana should be given up.

The nada yogi is capable of hearing a voice in the waking condition if he is at a very advanced stage. To him, it appears as if someone is whispering into his ears. This is a kind of *siddhi*, a power, to hear a sound of the unknown.

In India there is a flourishing sect known as the *karnapishachee*, meaning 'the ghost in the ears'. Karnapishachees are often consulted by people in times of difficulty. They keep a bell-like thing in the hand and ring it close to their ears for some time until they hear a voice. Whatever is heard and whispered in their ears is conveyed to the person concerned. Enough precautions should be taken by sadhakas to avoid this state of achievement as it often leads to deafness. Therefore, the karnapishachees in India are hard of hearing. They find it very difficult to hear and understand anything that is spoken to them.

Preparation for nada sadhana

First of all, the nada yogi should practise moola bandha, vajroli and yoga mudra. They are important. When they have been learnt, he should practise kumbhaka and focus his consciousness on bindu. Then the practice of bhramari should be added. Bhramari should be practised with the ears plugged, and the eyes pressed with the fingers. The upper and lower teeth should be kept apart, unclenched. Then the actual practice of nada yoga should flow.

Practice for the manifestation of nada

Sit down on a pillow, placing the soles on the ground and the elbows resting on the knees and hamstrings. For some, a lower pillow will be comfortable and for others a higher one. The most important point here is that the coccyx and the perineum should be pressed against the pillow at the point of mooladhara, and therefore the pillow should be round and hard. Thus, without contraction of the anus, the mooladhara chakra should be pressed by sitting on a high and hard pillow.

There are many pranayamas, the practice of which can cause nada to manifest. One of them is moorcha. After practising moorcha pranayama, yoni mudra, moola bandha and vajroli for a few minutes, start the practice of nada yoga like this. Plug both ears. Take the consciousness to bindu and try to find out or be aware of any sound that is internal. This internal sound may resemble any sound. It may be like a cloud passing, a stream flowing, the sea roaring or a bell ringing. It may also be the sound of a flute, the rhythm of a guitar or an awful noise of birds chirping in the evening at the time of sunset. It might even be the vision of a starry night devoid of any sound. It might be in the form of an awareness of the distant ocean or the sound of a thunderbolt. These internal sounds are to be discovered by the aspirant.

If it is difficult to discover a sound in bindu, circulate your mind in sahasrara or ajna, or in the centre of the brain, or in the right and left eardrums. Or, focus your mind at chidakasha or at the centre of the third eye, till you are sure to get the sound. The method of discovering the sound is simple. Instead of imagining a sound, make your mind one-pointed, then discover the first sound and pursue it up to the end. One inner sound of nada should be followed up to an extent where it becomes more and more clear and prominent. As soon as it is clear and prominent, another sound, a different note altogether, is heard and felt in the background.

When you discover the second sound, give up the first one and follow the second. For instance, close your ears and listen to the evening sound of birds. Keep on listening. When it becomes completely clear and distinct, find another sound manifesting behind, like the sound of a nightingale. Now, continue to follow your consciousness up. Remove the sound of the evening song of the birds from the background. Let the music of the nightingale become more clear. When it is completely distinct and clear to your consciousness, another sound will be heard in the background. The forthcoming sound is like the sound of crickets shouting, “chin, chin, chin, chin, chin.” When this sound also becomes

very clear to you, reject the previous one, the singing of the nightingale and pick up this new one. This will also become more clear after some time and will be replaced by a fourth one. This process continues until the consciousness is completely lost or until the consciousness is completely devoid of the contents of the mind.

Nada in different sheaths of consciousness

These sounds which are heard are true. They are the symbols of the content of the mind and the consciousness. The mind rests on these symbols and goes in quickly with their help. These sounds are experiences of the deeper layers of consciousness, belonging to the annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha and manomaya kosha. These sounds are not imaginary. They may be understood as the vibrations of different spheres of one's existence. The physical, pranic, mental, supramental and the ananda, or the atmic, are the five spheres of one's existence. In different spheres of existence different sounds are heard. There are physical sounds first, but when consciousness becomes fine and transcends the physical plane, it will come in touch with the subtle sounds of the movements of pranic consciousness in the physical body.

The entire range of human consciousness is divided into three or subdivided into five parts. The conscious state is constituted of the annamaya and the pranamaya koshas, and these two bodies are made up of food and prana. The second sphere of the personality is constituted of manomaya and vijñanamaya koshas and mainly contains mental and astral matter. The third dimension of consciousness is comprised of anandamaya kosha, which is a body full of bliss.

In the practice of nada yoga, the manifestation of nada takes place in accordance with the relation established between the mind and the other spheres of consciousness. For instance, if the mind or consciousness is rooted in the physical body, by closing your ears you will hear the sounds or vibrations produced by the movements of the heart, lungs,

brain, circulation of the blood and the process of metabolism and catabolism that are going on inside the body.

If consciousness is dwelling in the pranamaya kosha and has penetrated it, you will hear the nada of a flute accompanied by many more sounds. If the mind has gone deeper into the anandamaya kosha, then the other sounds will disappear and in its place the effect of nada yoga will remain.

It is difficult to tell which particular nada belongs to a particular sphere. In India, illustrations are given in the form of symbolic stories. The individual consciousness which keeps on soaring high and discovering the transcendental notes is symbolized as Rishi Narada in Indian mythology. Without denying the historical existence of Rishi Narada, the esoteric significance of the word Narada should be understood. Narada is supposed to be a rishi who has a *veena*, a musical string instrument, in his hands. In nada yoga, the sound of the veena is considered to be the music of a very high sphere. According to all the traditional cults of nada yogis, the nada of *murali*, flute, or veena belongs to that sphere of consciousness where *dwaita bhava*, or the duality of consciousness, ceases to exist.

Nada yoga in the Bhagavata

Nada yoga is illustrated, in the great book of the Indians, entitled *Bhagavata* (*Bhagavata* is different from the *Bhagavad Gita*). A symbolic and allegorical description is given in the form of the story of Krishna. *Bhagavata* mentions, "Lord Krishna left his place at midnight and went into a jungle. It was the full moon night of the first month of winter. He began to play the flute. The echo of the flute spread in the calm and undisturbed atmosphere. Music rose from the jungle and it was heard by the gopis, the village girls and cowherd girls. When they heard the sound of the flute, they immediately left their houses and their husbands, forgetful of all that was taking place. They ran without consideration, to the place where the nada from the flute was emanating. They started dancing about the flute bearer. After some time

it happened that each one of them found herself dancing with an individual Krishna.”

The story seems fantastic, but in fact it is not exactly understood by the people of the world. It is understood only by the yogis. Nada yogis consider Krishna to be that higher sphere of consciousness where the nada of the higher sphere emanates during the deepest state of nada sadhana. When the emanation of flute music takes place, the senses or the sense consciousness forsakes its respective objects, and the indriyas withdraw themselves from their respective centres of pleasure and perception. They recede and go back to the place from where the flute sound or the nada is emanating. There, the senses dance around the nada. In that state, the senses completely withdraw their relation from the outer objects. In other words, a yogi may say, “Dharana has taken place and dhyana is about to dawn.”

The word *Krishna* (कृष्ण) in Sanskrit is derived from the root word *karshan* (कर्षण) which means ‘that which draws, that which attracts’. Therefore, the word Krishna means ‘the puller, the withdrawer or the attractor’. It also means ‘a farmer’ and, the word *gopi* means ‘cow’. In Sanskrit *go* means ‘senses’, ‘cow’, ‘poor’, ‘the humble’ and ‘the whole perceptible universe’. Ordinarily, the word *gopi* means ‘the daughter of a cowherd family’. Symbolically, *gopi* means ‘senses’. And who are the husbands of the senses or gopis? It may be said that for the eyes – form and for the ears – sound is the husband. When the music of a flute is heard, the sense of hearing leaves or withdraws itself from the outer audible sounds and merges itself in the inner nada. This process is called *pratyahara*.

Nada yoga and Saint Kabir

A famous nada yogi named Kabir describes in one of his poems, “Who is there playing upon a flute in the middle of the sky? On the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna, the flute is being played, and the confluence of three rivers – Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati – takes place in Trikuti. Oh,

this is a meeting point of Ganga and Yamuna. The sound emanates from the North! Cowherd girl, hear the sound of the flute and lo! They are all hypnotized by the nada.”

The ultimate experience in nada yoga is a sound higher than the sound of the flute. The music of the highest sphere is not of the flute, veena, cloud, thunderbolt, clapping or any other musical instrument, nor is it the clapping of brass instruments. It is not even similar to the classical music of either the East or West. The music of the highest sphere is anahada nada.

Anahada nada and anahata nada

What is anahada nada? No one has been able to tell till this day. Some say that it is the cosmic sound of *Om*. Others say it is like bhrumari, a sound resembling that of the bees, an unceasing and unbroken sound of the honey bee. Some say that it is the beat of the heart, ‘khat, khat, khat’, which is called anahada nada.

Again, some people call it anahada, and others call it anahat. These two words convey two different meanings. Anahat means an plus aahat. *An* means ‘no’, *aahat* means ‘that which is striking, hammering or beating’. Therefore, *anahat* means ‘no beating or striking of two things’. Whenever a sound is produced, it is produced with the help of two things striking against each other. Aahat is the sound produced by striking, but anahat is a sound which is not produced by striking. It is spontaneous and automatic. Some scholars say that the nada is anahada (अनहद्). *An* means ‘no’ and *hada* means ‘boundary, compound’. Hence, *anahada* means ‘without any limit, without any boundary, without any specification’. It is a sound around which no limits can be put. It can be any sound.

Nada yoga and the great yogi Gorakhnath

The great guru Gorakhnath, disciple of Yogi Matsyendranath, was more evolved and realized in spiritual life than his guru. He writes, “Oh sadhu, aspirant! Do the japa of *Soham*. That

japa should not be done through the mind. It should be done through the consciousness, so that, even when you are engaged in your day-to-day activities, you should be aware of 21,6000 rhythms of your breath throughout the twenty-four hours of the day, at the rate of fifteen or nineteen rounds per minute, which means nine hundred and more breaths per hour. Anahada nada will emerge, and will manifest on its own.” He further says, “There will be light in the spinal cord. The solar system of the surya nadi will be awakened. You will feel an indescribable, vibrating sound from every pore of your body and that will be like *Om* or *Soham*.” This is a description of nada yoga according to Yogi Gorakhnath.

The ultimate nada

The ultimate nada that manifests in the highest sphere of consciousness is unspeakable. It is a sound coming from the sphere beyond the anandamaya kosha. A nada yogi believes that the actual point where the individual consciousness should fuse is in the highest state of nada. The aspirant or a sadhaka realizes his higher consciousness on nada and sees the whole universe in the form of sound.

Nada yoga in India

In India, different schools of nada yoga exist. Among them the cult of Maharshi Mehidhas, Radha Swami and Saint Kabir, a saint of the fifteenth century, are worth mentioning.

The initiation of nada yoga in India is imparted like the initiation of mantra and kriya yoga. Nada yoga sadhana remains still incomplete both in practice and in theory. Hatha yoga, dhyana yoga, raja yoga and other branches of yoga are more complete and are written with exactness, giving the minutest details, but this is not so with nada yoga.

There has been a sect of Muslims who follow the tradition of nada. Snake charmers in India are also in reality, great nada yogis, belonging to the cult of nada yoga.



Antar Mouna

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

To commemorate the First Patna Yoga Sammelan, *Antar Mouna* was published on 1st January 1968 by the Souvenir Committee of the event.

Preface

The Sanskrit word *mouna* means silence, and *antar* means inner. Therefore, the English name of this practice is 'inner silence', and it is a sadhana designed to make the aspirant aware of the inner silence as well as the inner noise which generally prevents him from knowing the silence.

In our daily life our minds are almost continually externalized. We see and hear only what is going on outside of us, and we have little understanding of the events taking place in our inner environment. The practice of antar mouna is designed to turn this around, so that for at least a short period we can see the workings of our mind and understand them. In reality antar mouna is one of the few permanent sadhanas which can be practised spontaneously all the twenty four hours of the day by anyone who is really determined to know himself. By maintaining awareness of one's internal environment, thoughts, emotional reactions, etc., one can speed up his personal evolution to the utmost degree. It will also make him understand the workings of his own rational and irrational mind, as well as giving him an understanding of what makes other people tick.

The technique for the meditational practice of antar mouna is the first step towards attaining this permanent state of inner understanding. Although it is to be practised for a maximum of one hour a day, its effects carry on after the practice is over and one will automatically start to know

his own hidden side and to see how he is reacting to life's situations in a clear and honest manner.

The practice of antar mouna is subdivided into a number of stages. The first stage of the technique is to be aware of all outside sounds and occurrences that are going on around. The second stage is to withdraw oneself from all outside stimuli and to be aware only of the workings of the mind as a detached witness: what it is thinking, how it is reacting and what images are coming from the subconscious mind.

The next practice is the spontaneous shifting between stages one and two, externalized and internalized awareness, which is followed in stage three by the creation and then dissolution of thoughts at will. Stage four is again awareness of spontaneous thoughts, but dissolution of these thoughts at will. Stage five, the last practisable stage, is the suppression or removal of all thoughts, or the awareness of shoonya, the void, followed in stage six by the state of spontaneous meditation.

Antar mouna is a complete training system for the awareness process – it teaches one how to know the processes of the mind and ways in which it can be brought under control. It is something which can be practised at any time by simply reflecting on the question, “What am I thinking? What is occurring now in my mental sphere?” When practised many times daily, this witnessing process becomes an automatic occurrence continuing by itself and showing you who you are, what you are doing here and where you are going. It can truly be said that in this practice through the awareness of inner noise you will come to know the voice of silence, the golden sound that sings of eternity.

—*Swami Nischalananda Saraswati*

Foreword

There are many books on the subject of meditation. Some of them are undeniably of great value. However, they only show the many ways in which this subject may be dealt with. These books are either philosophical treatises which are full of technical terms or else they are collections of instructions for very advanced yogis. These instructions are often, without proper understanding, erroneously applied in the teaching of beginners. Some of the books have dealt with the subject in a way which supposes that the reader is well versed in ancient Hindu scriptures. There are also such books which, under the pretence of calling themselves scientific, present us with a cliché of quasi-psychological explications mixed with Sanskrit words.

You will find nothing of this sort contained in this small book which is proposed chiefly for laymen who would like to start meditation themselves. Those who feel that something in their psyche can be improved and that there must be some method by which this is possible will also find this book useful.

The whole text of this work is a record of the lectures given by Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati at the Bihar School of Yoga during the first International Yoga Teachers' Training Course. Swami Satyananda needs no formal introduction today. The East as well as the West look upon him as a pioneer of the yoga renaissance.

The editors found that the lectures were complete in themselves. The method of the lessons and the way of expression were found to be of such a personal and informal nature that the editors refrained from making any change in the text in order that they might preserve the originality of the lectures. What you now have is a discourse in which an original figurative explanation is blended with clear instructions. The Sanskrit terms that appear are fully explained immediately in the text. If any psychological term occurs, it may not convey the same meaning as it does in psychological theories. Such terms were used in the sense that they threw some light upon the reality which was described for the students. The students had little, if any, psychological background.

The main topic of the discourse is antar mouna. *Antar* means 'inner' and *mouna* means 'silence'. Antar mouna is a part of yogic sadhana which can be practised separately. The whole practice consists of six stages. During these stages different techniques are applied (see the diagram in the appendix). The principle of all techniques is to remain an observer and witness of respective mental processes and not get involved in them. The practitioner can only proceed to the next stage after he has perfected the previous one. Yogic experiences confirm the psychological hypothesis of the existence of at least two distinct realms of psyche which are not conscious, subconscious and unconscious. These realms are, up to a certain level, attainable with the help of antar mouna.

Some similar techniques as antar mouna can be found in the practices of the different schools of vedic, tantric and Buddhist yoga. However, we do not propose to trace the origin of antar mouna. The purpose of this book is to serve as a guide to spiritual aspirants as it is also a preliminary stage of *atma vichara*, method of self-inquiry, found in jnana yoga. It is for anyone who would like to improve his personality, correct some psychological error, and, of course, for those who wish to start the practice of meditation. Those

who find themselves capable of overcoming the fact that they do not have a teacher can easily use this book as a guide to meditation.

It is our belief that it may be of some help to psychologists who find themselves interested in the factual psychological material of yogic practices. The material may be of some help to modern psychological theory, at least in the field of psychotherapy. As far as we know there are some western techniques of psychotherapy which have a similar approach as antar mouna. It would be interesting to compare antar mouna with some of them. Similarities can be found in the method of self-analysis of Karen Horney who is one of the greatest exponents of neo-psychoanalysis. The school of neo-analysis is endeavouring to help man develop an integrated personality. The practice of antar mouna can help one to make himself a man of 'productive orientation' of Erich Fromm, one of the greatest disciples of Sigmund Freud, now representing the most progressive wing of the neo-analytical school of America. Many are trying to make a comparison of oriental psychology and Jung's analytical psychology. Here we feel that antar mouna, especially its last stages, can be of great value if combined with Jung's technique of 'active imagination'.

By comparing the technique of antar mouna with the techniques devised by western psychologists, such as Autogene Training of J.H. Schultz, Active Hypnotic Training of E. Kretschmer, Progressive Relaxation of E. Jacobson, techniques of Psychosynthesis of R. Assagioli, we are able to make the suggestion that at least the first two stages of antar mouna can be regarded as a complementary technique to the Relaxation-Activation-Training of M. Macbac, thus improving the phase of relaxation in this technique. It is possible to say that these different training techniques are but Western versions of the many techniques of ancient yoga nidra.

However, we do not hold to be the centre and pioneers of comparative study and psychological research in the field

of yoga. There was a great amount of work done in semantic investigation, and a lot of suggestions and proclamations were issued, but we are happy to be able to say that there is serious research being conducted in the field of the actual experience of yogis. At present some professional psychologists: I. Sen, M. Eliade, H. Dumoulin, M. Fryga, R.S. Mishra, J. Mumford, Y. Wendt, Ananda Bhavanani, and others are exploring phenomena of sadhana as well as the possibilities of yoga therapy. One of the most promising centres of research seems to be Esalen Institute of California, where the realms of human psyche are explored by some of the most prominent American psychologists. Their methods of investigation seem to be in some aspects analogous to the way of Indian yogis.

Swami Satyananda, who made this work possible, really has the ability to simplify and clarify things while giving lectures to the general Western public.

—25 November 1967, Munger, Bihar,
Editors

Meditation is not possible at all times, it comes and goes like a wave. Meditation results in peace, joy, health, rest and power. When you close your eyes, you see consciousness inside. Beyond the body is mind and beyond the mind is spirit. The purpose of meditation is to discover this unseen spirit. Through meditation you are able to transcend the world of name and form. You come to a world which has no boundaries and no limitations. Therefore, remember that meditation is like a bridge which takes you from this shore to the other shore.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Introduction

*Om! Prostrations to the Guru
Who is embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss
Who is not bound by world consciousness,
Who is peacefully without support, and self-effulgent.*

All the different systems of Indian sadhana have one goal in view. The goal is *moksha*, freedom or liberation from all illusive attitudes towards the world and liberation from the wheel of birth and death. Moksha can be attained only through the perfection of man. Moksha is liberation by contentment. It is the divine state of happiness which is eternal.

Man will never find happiness in enjoying worldly things. He will always proceed higher to the subtler planes which are far above the gross planes of worldly pleasures, and then comes the state in which he finds it necessary to employ some means by which he is able to accelerate his spiritual evolution.

One of the wonderful means to accelerate spiritual evolution is *antar mouna* given to us by Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Those who have formed the opinion that it is a difficult task to control the mind will have to change their idea. It is not difficult to control the mind, but it is difficult to find a proper method of controlling the course of the mind.

The best way is to start meditation with a prayer. If there is controllable drowsiness concentration will be better, but you must not be tired. Therefore, the best time for meditation is the early hours of morning. Before you take up the practice you should first of all relax yourself physically and mentally. You may sit in any asana in which you feel easy and comfortable. Your concentration should be spontaneous and without any strain. If you practise the right technique of meditation from the very beginning you will have no difficulty at all.



Antar Mouna 1

14 November 1967

Stage 1: Awareness of sense perception

Antar mouna belongs to the fifth step of raja yoga. The fifth step of raja yoga is classically and academically called *pratyahara* which means withdrawal or retreat. It is very interesting when we realize just how unscientific we are in our approach to spiritual knowledge when we see how most of us would like to practise *dhyana*, meditation, immediately, without any proper understanding at all. We fail to understand that it is not possible to be in *dhyana* without the help of the senses and the mind. Unless we are able to withdraw our senses in a systematic manner without any touch of suppression, it will not be possible for us to get into *dhyana*. Therefore, antar mouna, as I said earlier, being one of the practices of *pratyahara*, is a wonderful practice for you to learn.

By the practice of antar mouna you achieve mastery over a great part of your mind. Various other techniques are dangerous for some people. These people dive into concentration without having voluntary control over their mind. They have not mastered their mental functions sufficiently to be able to enter safely into the state of consciousness, to which they are not accustomed. When they come to the point of concentration in meditation they fall down unconscious, as though they were struck by a peculiar kind of sickness. For example, I recall the time

when I gave concentration exercises to a large gathering of people. Hundreds of them fell down unconscious. From this experience I can assure you that if you practise pratyahara first, you will be much better off. It is essential to master certain sense functions first and certain functions of the brain up to a certain level before higher practices are attempted.

Withdrawal of the senses is pratyahara. What is the withdrawal of senses? There are five senses, five sense experiences and five sense objects. How is it possible to withdraw the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching? First you close your eyes and become aware of the remaining sense experiences around you however disturbing they may be. For example, there may be a sound in the next room or even in the same room with you. You must try to analyze the sound, understand it and grasp the significance of it. You must separate the sense from the sense experience and only become aware of the experience of sound vibration. To illustrate this further, imagine a bell is ringing. First we consider the ear, second the bell, and third the sound of the bell. You must be aware of the sound which is the sense experience. The bell, the sense object, belongs to the outer world. By realizing it you accomplish the first step of sense withdrawal.

It is important that you realize that it is not an absent-minded comprehension, but rather a present-minded awareness of the objective reality which you are trying to grasp. You may take one experience and analyze it fully, or you may take many, one right after the other, but sooner or later you must come to the point where you are able to analyze and understand the perception. Then the experience alone remains – devoid of the object, and later it is devoid of the subject as well. If you can achieve this then you have perfected the first stage of antar mouna where you get rid of external experiences.

Now let us see how we practise the first stage of antar mouna. It is possible to practise it anywhere. For instance, if you are a passenger in a car you just close your eyes and try

to remain outside of your experiences. Now, try to observe mentally what you feel, hear and smell. You will find that in a short time all external sounds and objects have disappeared from your mind. Your senses have become withdrawn, although of course, not completely. This then, is the first step of antar mouna which, as pratyahara, is the fifth limb of raja yoga. It is the first step in the esoteric life and the first step to samadhi, self-realization.



In order to understand your mind, you have to practise antar mouna, inner silence. Antar mouna makes the mind free from unnecessary thoughts and provides mental equilibrium. Our mind is constipated with foul conceptions, tensions, old samskaras and many unfulfilled desires. As long as we have unnecessary worries and inhibitions the mind cannot relax.

As long as the elephant is strong and untamed, you have to understand and watch it carefully, otherwise it will harm you. In the same way, as long as the mind is not under your control you have to make friends with it. Once you have become master of your mind you can treat it as you like, but not in the initial stages. So, while doing antar mouna, you should leave the mind entirely free and witness its movements. Thus you will gradually be able to understand the mind.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Antar Mouna 2

15 November 1967

Stage 2: Awareness or visualization of the spontaneous thought process or thoughtless state

When the sense perception, of which you have now become aware, comes to you consciously, without any feeling of disturbance, it means that you are able to understand it. If there is a disturbing sound and you practise awareness of it, it will become less and less disturbing. It will become little more than an ordinary sound. It will convey no meaning to you as to what is producing it, why, where, when and so on. Your mind will turn inwards and become indifferent to the external sounds. After this, you must be aware of any spontaneous thought that may arise. You must have the awareness that you are thinking certain thoughts under compulsion and also that there are thoughts that are coming to you without your wanting them. The thoughts coming to the consciousness level from the subconscious level are called *samskaras*, impressions.

If you sit for a while, a number of thoughts will come to you without any reference or context. For example, you may be eating a delicious dinner and suddenly a thought comes to you that the previous night you did not have a good rest. This thought is irrelevant. While resting in bed various thoughts may suddenly come to you. These are called spontaneous thoughts. They are embedded in your

personality and do not necessarily need any external stimuli. If you see a church and a pious or an evil thought comes to you it is not considered to be spontaneous, but if the thought of a mango comes instead, then it is a spontaneous thought, because it was not stimulated by the sight of the church. It is a voluntary expression of a certain part of your personality, which modern psychology terms subconscious.

In Vedanta it is referred to as the *sukshma sharira*, or the subtle body. Sukshma sharira, or the astral body in the doctrine of karma, is known as a samskara, the latent impressions embedded in your life. As the smoke comes out of the coal in a kitchen, in the same manner a few thoughts come out of the accumulated thoughts. What we usually do the moment these thoughts come to us is take them up, if they are good ones, and send them back if they are bad or painful. The bad thoughts that are sent back are not exhausted or used up unless, of course, you are a jnani or viveki. Practically all bad thoughts are sent back to the subconscious while most of the good ones are exhausted. The result being that the subconscious vessel is filled with bad thoughts and devoid of good ones. Therefore, in the practice of antar mouna we concentrate on calming down the disturbances of the *indriyas*, senses, and become aware of spontaneous thoughts which arise from the subconscious. The best way to accomplish this is to make your mind aware that you are going to practise 'being aware of your thoughts'. Say to yourself, "I am trying to be aware of my thoughts."

Usually it is different with each individual. Here are a few examples. You feel that you are sitting in a corner of your mind and looking at the inner space or *chidakasha*. You are constantly repeating the mantra "I want to see my thoughts; which thought is passing through me? Am I thinking or am I not thinking? What am I thinking?" Sometimes, even while you are aware of the entire thought process, a thought slips by without you noticing it. Only when it has passed the area of your observation do you become aware of it. For example,

“I was thinking about a mango, but while I was thinking about it, I was not aware that I was thinking.”

Sometimes there is momentary absent-mindedness. For the correction of this there is another practice. If you sit down on your veranda, for example, and you look down the road – the road is clear, no one is on the road – think that it is your consciousness. Then, there appears someone on the road. You will see shadows moving. They are the shadows of your thoughts. That is the higher state of *antar mouna*. This will be possible only for those who are good at visualization. Then, the road disappears and the shadows remain.

The third way is to act as a witness or *sakshi* as it is called in Vedanta. We say, “I am a witness and I want to know what thoughts are in my mind.” Now, sit down anywhere and try to remain aware of your spontaneous thought process. You may experience that the whole *chidakasha* is empty and there is no thought. Then you should say to yourself, “Now, no thoughts are coming, and I am only aware of the empty space.” This practice becomes more and more inspiring and enlightening as you proceed further and further.

If you practise this for about two months you may see yourself in the lap of your mother at the age of two. In this process the mind usually goes back into the past and never into the future. Women find this practice easier than men.

The chapter ‘*Vibhootipada*’ in Sage Patanjali’s *Yoga Sutras* is a good text to study. It is a method by which a yogi is able to go back as far as his previous life. In our practice, we are able both to analyze our psyche and uncover our subconscious mind.



Antar Mouna 3

16 November 1967

Stage 2 continued: Awareness or visualization of the spontaneous thought process or thoughtless state

In the second practice of antar mouna when you are supposed to carefully witness the spontaneous flow of your thoughts, you may be able to observe your thoughts either before they come to the conscious plane, while they are on the conscious plane or after they have left the conscious plane. It all depends on the careful observation and attitude of the mind. If you are alert you may be able to predict a thought before it comes to the conscious plane, but if you are absent-minded you may not be able to detect the thought until the next day. A person is not only able to think one thought at one time, but he can think of many thoughts in a fraction of a second.

Outwardly we feel that we think, but actually the thinking takes place in the subconscious plane of the mind. It is like looking out at a crowd of people where you are able to see all the faces but not any one individually. You may, however, remember them the next day. A thought does not take much time, especially if it is spontaneous. A conscious thought takes longer. While practising this, an aspirant should be constantly alert; never moving his body, never scratching, never sleeping. He should be aware of whatever he does physically, mentally, subconsciously, voluntarily, and involuntarily at all times.

This is the path of introspection. It is not a good experience for most of us. In advance, you must always remind yourself of this. In practising introspection, the impurity comes up. It is only in samadhi, and not in dhyana, that all the purities such as peace, bliss and light appear. The practice of antar mouna expels negative thoughts because it is a kind of self-eliminator of the negative impurities. You either enter a state of chidakasha where there are no thoughts, a vacuum state, in which you only remember bad acts or you see all the people who caused you pain or trouble. The longer you practise the more experiences you will see. It only becomes clear in the end. Symbolic expressions come up. Events that your conscious mind hates to remember appear. This will only happen when you have stepped into the subconscious.

If you have these subconscious explosions during antar mouna, the best method of eliminating them is to write them down in a diary or to tell someone whom you trust. That is important. The most common experiences are: snakes, good food, hundreds of people moving everywhere, jungles, swimming in water, the fear of being drowned and flight in space. We now have the conscious manifestation of all the thoughts, desires and experiences that we do not want to know. They must constantly be analyzed. For example, if you have a thought about the fear of drowning, it is not sufficient to say that you just have a fear complex. Rather, it may be looked upon as a symbolic manifestation of some action or actions in the past which you do not want to remember. There must be an interpretation of these thoughts.

The next question is, "When should we practise this and how long should we continue it?", "At what time should we proceed to the next stage?" The moment you find the subconscious manifestations becoming greater and greater, you should go on to the next stage.

When should we give up the second stage and go on to the next stage? Thoughts come and go; that is the second

stage. Next, visions appear and you cannot understand them; you are afraid of them, and conscious thoughts become less and less. Now is the time for the yogi to go on immediately to the third stage.

The yogi does not continue on and on with the second stage because he knows that all his thoughts can never be exhausted. To a certain extent you have to manifest them and then you must check them.



Antar Mouna 4

18 November 1967

Stage 3: To pose thoughts at will

While you were practising the second stage of antar mouna you visualized shadows in the form of visions or dreams. If these shadows come to you in a horrible way, that is, if they are very bad experiences, it is time to proceed to the third stage of antar mouna.

It will not be difficult for you to understand the third stage because you do the exact opposite of the second stage. You may say that it is a counterpose. Unlike everything being spontaneous in the second stage, in the third stage everything is done at will. You should not allow any spontaneous thought to arise unless you want it. If a spontaneous thought does come then you should immediately try to dispose of it. Do not allow it to occupy your mind. This is very important.

How do you get rid of a spontaneous thought? First of all, you close your eyes and start thinking about some theme. It must consist of a sequence of events that were thought by you in a conscious manner. For example, you might say, "I have misplaced my notes. Now, where did I see them last? At home? No, I remember that I took them from home in the morning." You see, you must invite a thought and then expand it in a definite way, but do not let a thought come of its own accord. If a thought comes and says, "Please think

about me,” you should reply, “No, I do not want you, I want only thoughts which I will think.” This is an exercise to develop a conscious thought and then to eliminate it. If any conscious thought or experience that has taken place in your life is not eliminated, or at least not immediately analyzed, it will proceed directly to the subconscious mind. Once it enters your subconscious mind it becomes a samskara and is a behind-the-scene influencing factor in life.

Therefore, in spiritual life, you must be able to recall at will past experiences of your life. If you are looking at impulses you must give all thoughts to them. The whole thing should be clear before you. You should be able to see nervous excitement when you see yourself in a mob attacking someone’s home. You just cut off your mind and say, “Get out.” This is how we eliminate the conscious thought. Psychology also accepts the idea that if any conscious experience is properly analyzed it loses its force, and that is the purpose of this exercise.

I feel that when you are given the freedom to express any thought of your choice you should select a bad thought rather than a good one, because I know that it is easy to think of good thoughts and it is also easy to get rid of them, but it is difficult to get rid of bad thoughts. Therefore, we should try to develop a method or technique by which we are able to throw out the negative thoughts from our mind. When a good thought comes to you about a certain person, and you think that he is a good person, a wonderful friend, and so on, but when you think one bad thought about him it destroys all the good thoughts. Now, you wish to throw out this bad thought and resume the good thoughts, but you find that you cannot. It usually happens this way and people spend sleepless nights and restless days worrying about the bad thought. They have probably tried several ways of getting rid of the bad thought, but almost always fail.

Therefore, I have used this third exercise in antar mouna in which we invite a bad thought or at least a thought that we consider to be bad. We dwell on the thought for a while

and become one with it, then we give our mind a jerk and throw the thought out. A stage of vacuum should arise in the place of the thought; there should be no thought in the mind. At this time you should invite another new thought to your mind and start the exercise again. When the bad thought comes, think it over, dwell on it for a while and then throw it out. I must remind you again that it is no use thinking of good thoughts during this exercise. You must only think of those thoughts that have a destructive influence on your mind.

In spiritual life eliminating bad thoughts is a useful practice. This is the only way that you can know the fundamental nature of a thought. If this practice is continued for fifteen or more days, you can develop a spontaneous psychological conditioning with which you will be able to set aside any thought at will. At least I can assure you that you will not spend any sleepless nights or restless days. You will know how to set aside the bad thoughts. I can tell you of my personal experience. I can bring any thought to my mind and then at will I can get rid of it. I can throw out the most important and burdensome thought. It does not even take me a second. I just perceive it and then throw it away. I do not have to think, "Oh, this thought is coming and I do not want it." If it is not something new, I do not share the thought with my will. It is something that is given to the mind when you practise this third stage, but you must practise it many times. You must remember one important thing while you are practising – you are practising *antar mouna* and not just merely thinking.

There are also thoughts that have no form. They do not have any particular dimension. You will not have any trouble disposing of them. I am only concerned about good and bad thoughts, divine and undivine. The formless thought such as, "I must take a bath" or "I must go to the toilet," are called *nityakarma* or routine thoughts. They do not create a *samskara*. You must not concern yourself about these thoughts. You must always take thoughts of a very heavy dimension. A typical

thought would be, “I have an enemy who has been troubling me for so many years. Whenever I am conscious of him I feel terrible and want to kill him.” This is the type of thought you must dwell on and then dispose of at will, quickly. I believe that if you think of more than three thoughts in one practice it will be too much for you. You must complete one whole theme and the theme must be of your own planning. By this I do not mean that you should complete the theme right up to the present – that is, you should think up to a certain extent and then cut it off. Do not repeat the same thought twice; that is known as brooding. When you think about a certain place in one thought scheme, and then the same place returns in a later thought, you should say, “What is the use of this same thought again?”

The mind has a certain brooding tendency and likes to return to the same thought again and again. This tendency is very dangerous as far as the development of neurosis is concerned. When modern psychology analyzes the causes of neurosis it finds that this brooding over the same point over and over again is one cause. When you become aware that this brooding over one point is the nature of the mind, you should be especially aware of it in your practice of *antar mouna*. When you finish a theme you must tell yourself, “Yes, now this thought is finished. This will not be thought of again.” If you like the topic very much, you will not completely stop thinking about it. Then, you must say, “I am going to think about this topic again,” and so on. There will come a certain movement in your thinking process and your mind will say, “Enough,” and the thinking of the topic will be finished. Possibly some portion of the thought will remain. There may be a mild suppression of the topic but it will be only mild, because most of the topic will have been analyzed. Part of the topic will again return to you. But, I say, why should there even be a mild suppression? You should analyze it thoroughly by the method of impartial witness; witnessing at will. The thought does not come on its own, you must bring it up.

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Stage 3 continued: To pose and dispose of thoughts at will

This third exercise will help you a little later in the future planning of things, because, after all, future thinking and the materialization of your future thoughts depend upon your present correct thinking. You should be able to fulfil any future plan within a few months or a few years after practising this third exercise. It depends on the individual. Future planning should be controlled, it should not be spontaneous. You must form a definite pattern to follow. The point is that you should only include the item of the future planning after you have gained a certain control over your psychic dimensions. Then, the mind will lead you to the right point. You cannot practise this without having attained perfection in the previous exercises; they are interdependent.

The first stage is to be practised until an undisturbed attitude to the outer objects has developed. The second stage should be practised until the horrible dimensions of the psyche have appeared. Then and only then should you proceed to the third stage.

The third stage is very important. It is one of the meditations that can be found in a differently expressed way in Buddhist meditation. It is constant self analysis; we call it

atma vichara. This third exercise is the preliminary stage of *atma vichara*. Modern psychology has something similar, but I believe that when this particular technique is introduced into the psychological field it will be much better. Some of the scholars of both the East and West have assimilated some of this but of course, not in toto. This method is only helpful for those people having an independent psychic system; that is, having their psyche and thinking system under their control. It is not for those people who are unable to think or those suffering from neurosis. It is only when you have developed the power of imagination that you become aware of your difficulties, and when you come to know that there must be a method that will help you – then this practice will help you. Please remember that diary writing is an important method that can be added to this practice.

Again, you should pose a thought, dwell on it for some time and then get rid of it. This process must be strictly followed. If any other thought spontaneously comes to you it is your duty to reject it immediately. After this you should practise a state of thoughtlessness for a few moments before you take up another thought.

Sometimes you will find (if you are realistic, of course) that you are thinking about a thought that came spontaneously. The spontaneous thought gets mixed up with your conscious posing of thoughts. Therefore, I feel that it is better if you choose more than one thought and then pick out a certain thought with which you develop a theme. In this manner you will make sure that you will not select a spontaneous thought. For instance, you may say mentally, “Now I am going to think about this trip or that trip or my friend.” You must also remember to choose the thought that is the most difficult for you to get rid of. It is no use choosing an easy thought.

During the practice of *antar mouna* you will find yourself, for a short time, engrossed in a state of momentary depression because the mind revolts against analysis. Every mind does not like to be analyzed. The more you try to

practise, the more resistance you will meet. Minds that are attached to the worldly pleasures do not like to be analyzed. Therefore, it is best if you practise this exercise simply and as naturally as you can.

You will also come across the experience of rejecting a thought without completely analyzing it. This may take place for any number of reasons depending on what your thought was about. Here, part of the thought becomes suppressed. It will remain unexpressed in your subconscious mind. You will not be able to help it as you know *vasanas*, hidden desires, are endless. If you think that you should think of a thought completely, you can be sure that you can never finish it in this life. You see, there is no end to it; one thought leads to another and that thought to another, and so on. What I am trying to explain is that it is better to think a thought two-thirds through and then get rid of it rather than brood over the same thing day in and day out.

If you continue brooding, the thought will only embed itself further and further or deeper and deeper in your subconscious. You must think that a thought must be checked at a particular stage and not be allowed to continue further. The third practice of *antar mouna* is now over.



Antar Mouna 6

20 November 1967

Stage 4: Awareness of spontaneous thoughts and disposing of thoughts at will

After you have practised the three stages of antar mouna you will find that after the third stage, before you are able to pose a thought, thoughts will spontaneously come to your mind. Their frequency, the number of thoughts coming one after another, will create so much pressure that you will find it difficult to pose any thought at all. It is at this stage that the fourth exercise should come in.

In the fourth exercise you must learn to become a witness of the spontaneous thoughts. Sometimes you do not know which thoughts you have seen and which thoughts you have not. There are so many thoughts, you do not know whether you are thinking or not. At this time you should just remain an impartial witness to all the confusion. It is something like shankhaprakshalana. In the beginning, undigested food comes out and later the mixed material comes. You do not know which is rice, bread or fruit. This is what the psychic confusion should be like at the end of the third stage and at the beginning of the fourth stage of your practice. You are aware that you are thinking but you do not know what you are thinking of. Suddenly, during this psychic confusion, a very clear and prominent thought arises from nowhere. It is so clear that you are

able to pick it up easily. You must follow this thought. It is a projection of your deeper consciousness. It arises from the deepest sphere of the subconscious. Unfortunately, this thought that arises is almost always related to a bad event or experience. Because it comes from the deepest sphere of the subconscious it may be a thought from the past or perhaps a future thought. It is a precognitive thought and is therefore spontaneous and as such, it must be got rid of. This thought should not be recognized; it should not be accepted. It is a very clear thought, but it is somewhere beyond thought dimensions. This type of thought belongs to two types of thought and vision.

So, in the fourth exercise you must become aware of the spontaneous thought and then dispose of it immediately. The emergence of a spontaneous thought from the confusion and pandemonium of many thoughts is in many cases precognitive and premonitory. We can safely attribute this particular thought which has arisen from the confusing system of thinking to the deeper layers of the subconscious mind. As you probably know, the deeper you penetrate your subconscious personality, the more clear and realistic are the thoughts that appear. But the intellectual and emotional level of your thought will become impractical. They are impracticable and idealistic and not always true. These thoughts which come up from the deeper layers of the subconscious belong to the dimensions of truth, vision and the lower class or a lower quality of prophecy. It is in the light of this context that you should look upon and understand the psychological background of the different kinds of prophecies made by occultists, astrologers and fortune-tellers. These people have at their disposal their own method of reaching into the subconscious mind.

When you develop such clear spontaneous thoughts in the beginning of the fourth exercise you will find that it always informs you of an imminent accident or of some difficulties that you will encounter shortly. Aspirants who want to go still further in this practice should immediately

dispose of these thoughts at will. But those who wish to immerse themselves in such spontaneous thoughts and keep on thinking about them for a longer period will find their spontaneous thoughts coming through unknown areas of the past. They will be surprised. However, with that the depth of the experience will end and they will have to begin their practice all over again from the beginning.

For instance, the spontaneous thought of a snake arises, and it comes into your room to bite you. What I mean is the type of thought that will make you wonder and think, "Did the snake bite me or did it escape from my room?" If you keep on thinking about this you may be able to know more details of the thought, but you may not be able to find the meaning for yourself. In due course you will find that your psychic system is disturbed. You must then start the practice from the beginning. Therefore, I can tell you that at this stage of the practice, the awareness of spontaneous thoughts, however precognitive or premonitory and however prophetic they may be, will only prove to be an obstacle to you. I have seen many psychic mediums and psychic individuals stranded at this point, unable to go beyond. If you are able to wait and resist these temptations I can assure you that you will be able to go deeper and deeper into your subconscious mind. You will go deeper within the self.

Now, a stage will come where the spontaneous thoughts will cease; there will be no more thoughts. There is a state of mental vacuum. In the case of those aspirants who will be able to rid themselves of the previously mentioned temptations, this state of vacuum will come. While in this vacuum state you should have the constant awareness that, "I am practising antar mouna." You are aware of yourself, *ahamkara*, the ego, remains and there is the feeling and perception of external things from time to time. You become so quiet internally that you are unable to see any thought and at the same time you hear, for example, a train passing, the clock chiming and then you may not hear them. It is an off and on type of experience. It is a state when sometimes your

faculties of perception are turned inward and sometimes they are turned outward. It is something similar to what is experienced during the first part of sleep. You call it drowsiness, when you are aware of everything and then for a few moments you lose the awareness of what has happened around you. Certain types of experiences come to you and others are blocked. You might be awake at three or four in the morning just lying in bed thinking about something. You must have experienced this condition. You may be thinking about anything, spiritual or non-spiritual. While you are thinking, a train or car may pass and you do not hear it even though you are not sleeping. Then simultaneously there is a bell ringing in the distance and someone is banging your door – you hear the bell but you do not hear the banging. In Sanskrit this condition is called *antar mukha vritti*, modification of the internal mind, when the mind is looking inside. It is inert or dead to some of the experiences of the senses, but is capable of receiving certain sensations.

When your mind becomes free from any kind of thought and when it is aware of only some sense experiences, then *pratyahara* is completed. The fifth limb of *raja yoga* known as *pratyahara* ends here. After this it becomes *dharana*. So, the fourth stage of *antar mouna*, which is the practice of *pratyahara*, opens the door to *dharana*, concentration.



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21 November 1967

Stage 5: Thought-freeness

The fifth practice of antar mouna does not require much effort on your part. It becomes an automatic development of your consciousness which was prepared by the practices of the four previous stages. You cannot practise this fifth stage without having first perfected the four previous stages. Each stage must lead into the other; each must prepare you for the next.

You will have the experience similar to that of fainting. You will have the experience of soaring between the consciousness, subconsciousness and small parts of the unconsciousness. You will be in the unconsciousness for a short while, in the consciousness for a short while, but you will be in the subconsciousness for a greater period of time. Your *chitta vrittis*, mental modifications, keep on floating simultaneously from this end to that end. The stage of unconsciousness becomes stronger and stronger, and more and more permanent. The spontaneity of thought has been checked by cutting the link in the chain of spontaneous thoughts. You will now find yourself in a thoughtless and thought-free state of mind, where you are sometimes aware of external affairs and at other times you are not. You will find that for a short while you are conscious, for a longer while you are subconscious, and for a very short time you

are unconscious. The time you spend in the unconsciousness increases as you progress in this stage.

If proper methods are not followed in the fifth stage, you will find that within a few weeks you will be landing yourself in a state of mind where you become more non-conscious, less subconscious and still less conscious. You may find yourself non-conscious for about half an hour. For example, when you are practising you are aware of your surroundings and then you go to the different planes of your psyche. Then you find that you have been non-conscious for half an hour. You do not know how to check this. What will happen then? I can tell you that if it is not counter-attacked within a few weeks, you will enter into jada samadhi. *Jada* means inert, dead or lifeless. You develop jada samadhi in which your consciousness enters into an unmanifested state, *avyakta*. There are hundreds of spiritual aspirants throughout the world who are practising this jada samadhi, never ultimately realizing that they have made a mistake. The practice of jada samadhi only leads them astray from the spiritual path and into the kingdom of tamas.

Now we are coming to the last stage of antar mouna, the stage where prominent spontaneous thoughts arose from the depths of the subconsciousness. They were of a precognitive and premonitory nature. You were allowing these thoughts to arise from the subconsciousness and you were merely an observer of them, no matter how many thoughts came. You will find that within a few days they will cease. You are experiencing a state of vacuum, of thought freeness. In this stage you will find it very difficult to pose a thought or even to see the manifestation or expression of any thought. This state is known as *nirvichara*, which means no thought, no contemplation and no thinking process at all. However it remains only for a short time. It is always followed by a short period of non-consciousness of approximately five to ten minutes duration. When this happens you must develop an awareness of the three stages of consciousness. How will this be done? I will explain this in the sixth and final stage of antar mouna.

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22 November 1967

Stage 6: Awareness of the sleep-state of consciousness

How do we develop the awareness of the three states of consciousness? As I have previously said, much depends on the individual, but I will tell you by using myself as an example. When I sit for kriya number five I sometimes find the thought process becoming suspended and I am always entering into a state of semi-sleep or drowsiness. When this happens I immediately direct my awareness away from the spontaneous thought-freeness of kriya number five and at once become aware of the sleep consciousness. I should become aware that I am sleeping. I should think, "The sleep consciousness is manifesting in me." I should recognize these symptoms: lightness or heaviness of the body, loss of memory and losing all sense of the surroundings. All kinds of symptoms may be present; physical, mental or psychic. Then I must physically follow the descent of the consciousness. After all, sleep removes consciousness. It is not a startling event, but it is something usual. How does it take place? When my thought process is suspended, do I see visions and then become non-conscious for a few moments? You must remain alert and keep yourself so conscious that the whole process of sleeping should become clear to you.

Sleep is a mental condition where the contents of knowledge, which contain the objects of experience and

thinking, are locked away from the mind. It is when the mind is free from any object or knowledge that sleep comes. Therefore, it is a condition of non-objective awareness. It should be closely followed through an alert attitude of awareness. If you blink for a moment you have lost the awareness for the small amount of time it took to blink. If you even break the continuity of consciousness for one second it will take you fifteen to twenty minutes to come to your senses. It is like a person going down into a deep well with the help of a strong rope. As long as he has hold of the rope he can go into the deepest and the darkest well without any fear or danger. He is always sure of coming back up. But suppose he loses his grip on the rope, even for a second? He will of course fall into the deepest depths of the well. The aspirant must think that these same conditions apply to him. It is easy to hold a symbol, but to maintain an awareness of it in the sleep state is very difficult – and this is the ultimate state of antar mouna: inner silence.

When the inner disturbance and the inner modifications caused by chitta vritti are quietened then sleep comes, but remember, we must also control sleep. Remember that in antar mouna, as in dhyana, the sleep state of consciousness is not to be eliminated, but the sleep consciousness should be checked and controlled by the awareness of sleep. You do not have to escape from yourself in order to find a method by which you can control sleep. You must be able to maintain sleep under perfect control of your consciousness. It is known as a sleepless state or sleep awareness. Therefore, we have two events taking place simultaneously, sleep and awareness of sleep.

The ultimate goal of the methods is the same for all yogis. It may be antar mouna, kriya yoga, chidakasha vidya, yoga nidra or anything. The inner awareness is to be evolved and the outer awareness is to be dissolved. There is to be involution of outer consciousness and evolution of inner consciousness. That is the way of yoga. You must find a method which you are able to maintain in order to control

sleep. It is not avoiding sleep. The sleep should continue. Then you have the condition where a man sleeps and remains awake. This must be practised. Usually aspirants of meditation do not want to practise this. They want to develop concentration, but do not know how to do it. They have quite a particular notion about concentration, and they become nervous and disappointed when sleep comes. Some of them complain bitterly that when they sit for meditation sleep comes. It is difficult for me to make them understand that at this time they can sleep and that this sleep is necessary. If I tell them that the sleep consciousness is the necessary condition for the development of the inner awareness, perhaps they would spend all of their time sleeping. I must make it clear to you that unless you know how to sleep and unless you know how to remain awake during sleep (but not without sleep), it will not be possible for you to attain the higher states of yoga.

We shall now review the whole practice of antar mouna. First, we silence the senses and make a gradual attack on the mind. We give it complete freedom in spontaneous thinking. Then we gradually come to control only one part of the mind. Ultimately, we allow the mind to think whatever it wants, precognitive or premonitory. The fifth stage comes next and the controlling of the mental process. After the fifth stage comes the dangerous stage of the sleep condition.

Now we will discuss some of the methods of developing sleep awareness. When sleep comes during the highest stage of meditation, please choose a symbol for yourself. It is important that you have a symbol at this time. It should be your symbol and it should not change, because if you change it, it will not come during that moment of sleep consciousness. Your mental faculties will become so weak and so dull that you will not have enough memory to keep thinking different symbols. The symbol should come spontaneously. The moment sleep comes, the symbol should also come. As long as the symbol is there you will not enter into the state known as *laya*. *Laya* means total suspension of

consciousness. It is a dangerous state for spiritual aspirants. Laya samadhi is a wonderful samadhi. You can remain in this state for many, many hours. The body metabolism soon stops and the breathing may either continue or you may suspend it. The heart and the circulatory system go into a state of inactivity. It is all under voluntary control. It is very easy for some yogis to stop their hearts, but as far as spiritual awareness is concerned it is not wanted, because once you come out of this laya samadhi you will be the same person without any change in you. You will be the same type of man with the same *raga-dwesha*, likes and dislikes. There will be no spiritual change. However, once you overcome this laya samadhi and enter into *chaitanya samadhi*, samadhi full of light, then when you come out you will be a polished man. Many of the samskaras of your previous lives will have dissolved. It is said by almost all sannyasins and yogis that laya samadhi does not create any change in the individual's mental, psychic or spiritual life. So, this experience of laya samadhi is to be avoided. There are also many physical reasons why you should not practise it. The heart becomes weak, the lungs suffer and because of the cessation of the metabolism, toxins are assimilated in the body instead of being eliminated. These toxins cause premature death to the yogi. He suffers heavily and thus pays a great penalty.

It is at this stage that we come to know of the necessity of having a concrete object for meditation. I agree that God has no form, but for this stage of meditation form is a must. At this stage when sleep is descending it is a must to have a symbol. It must remain fixed and shining brightly in your psyche when sleep comes. It should be distinct from the black colour. The psychic colour during sleep is black. It is a dense black. You must find out the colour of your symbol; whether it is yellow, green, brown or any other colour. You must find out for yourself. The symbol must not be of an intellectual choice. It must come from the unconsciousness. The symbols have mostly been put forth by great seers. Your guru may give it to you or you may see it in a dream.

The symbol is also given by tradition. It is then called a hereditary symbol. For example, the same family has the same symbol passed on to it from generation to generation. It is not necessary to tell you again that you must always see the same symbol.

How do you know that you have slept and for how long? In sleep the conception of time is lost. Of this you should be careful. The symbol should be kept during this sixth kriya and as long as the illumined symbol is before you, you will remain conscious of sleep, but if during a certain period of sleep the symbol is switched off, it means that you have slept.

This completes the practice of antar mouna. For those who are keen to pursue meditation to the extent of realization of samadhi it is necessary to continue their sadhana under the guidance of a guru. Only a guru can lead a disciple from one practice to the higher one.

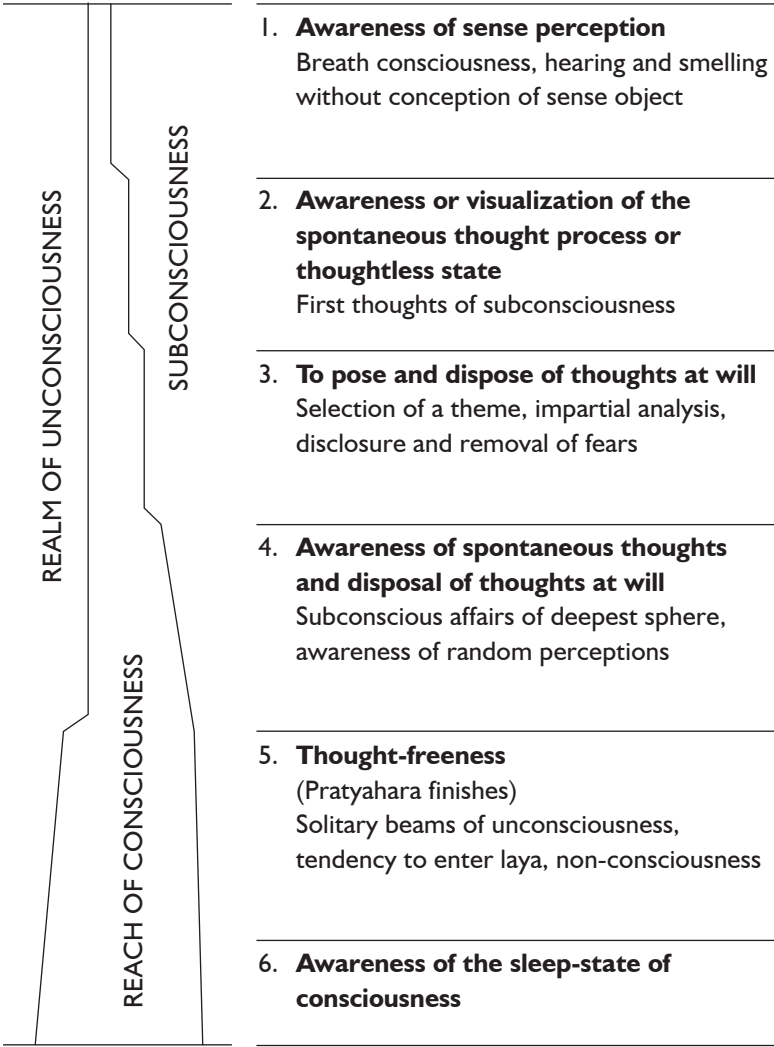
Hari Om Tat Sat



Often I pass to the place where there is no separation of the sun and moon, but where eternal light spreads a carpet of sparkling reflections of itself within the heart and eyes of all – even those who are blind see. I am where sweetness has no taste, for it is the essence of all beings, and where teardrops water flowers of happiness and pass into brooklets of experience, and then to the open sea.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

APPENDIX



Japa Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Japa Yoga is the Bombay Yoga Seminar, Commemoration Volume, 1968, compiled of lectures by Swami Satyananda to the students of the twenty-nation International Yoga Teachers' Training Course. This nine-month course was held from the 1st July, 1967 to 31st March, 1968 at the Bihar School of Yoga, in Munger, Bihar, India. The lectures later formed the basis of many books, including *Four Chapters on Freedom*, *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, and *Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda*. The volume is dedicated to Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh.

Ajapa Japa and Chidakasha Dharana

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Introductory Note

Swami Satyananda Saraswati, the author of *Japa Yoga*, has presented this topic in a clear, dynamic and instructive manner, specially intended for both the novice and adept students of yoga. His practical and thorough discussion of japa yoga sheds new light on the subject and assures a quick understanding to the reader in both the general and specific areas. The finer points that have been omitted hitherto in most of the other books dealing with japa yoga, have been included here.

Japa yoga has been compiled from a series of his original lectures presented for the International Yoga Teachers' Training Course at Bihar School of Yoga, Munger. You will find this book to be similar to a guru's first-hand instructions to his disciple.

To Swamiji goes our deepest reverence and thanks for permission to publish the knowledge and wisdom imparted by him. His magnetic love, power and dedication to truth, and the spiritual growth of his students and disciples is strongly felt by all who come in contact with him. Swamiji is the unceasing light and inspiration for all and a hope for a new generation to come.

—Editor

Japa Yoga

We are taking up the topic of japa yoga with the purpose to bring to you the efficacy of a wonderful system which is absolutely free from the slightest degree of danger and is convenient for keen aspirants as well as average men.

In order to define japa yoga we have to look at each word separately. The word *japa* means 'to rotate' or to 'repeat continuously without a break'. Hence, *japa yoga* can be defined as a wonderful system of union with the highest existence through the rotation of consciousness. Consciousness is an abstract matter and as such it requires some sort of base for its rotation. This will be discussed in detail later on.

Benefits

Japa yoga is an important aspect of psychic communion. It is a science of individual awakening of psychic awareness and spiritual powers. The subject of japa yoga has been sorely misunderstood in the past, in spite of the fact that all religions have laid special stress upon it in some way or the other. Religions, depending on faith in God, such as Christianity, Islam and even Buddhism, which does not believe in God, have recommended the use of a rosary. Japa has been discussed in various books all over the world. One of the most popular I can remember is *The Serpent Power* by Sir John Woodroffe. Swami Sivananda also proclaimed that

the method of japa yoga is “the easiest and cheapest way for self-realization.”

The advantage and utility of japa yoga cannot be undermined as it is: i) a steady and safe, although a longer method for self-realization and ii) can be practised by anyone. It is not a short path, but it is a sure path. Other systems of yoga require a minimum of qualification for practice or at least a little understanding from the layman, but in the case of japa yoga, it is readily and equally suitable to both the common man and the intellectual. It requires no preparation at all. It demands no understanding beforehand.

A few mantras, if practised under certain conditions and rules are sufficient to make one highly elevated. Mantras become especially powerful if they are repeated with emotion and devotion. They become, sometimes, the vehicle of spiritual thought vibrations. As servants attend to the physical comforts of the master, mantras attend to or serve the human personality. For example, japa benefits those suffering from abnormal complexes, inhibitions and lack of self-confidence, as well as various other psychic disorders. How is this done? The main point here is that the consciousness is changed – a man is brought closer to reality or God. These things only apply if a certain degree of mastery is attained with the mantra. Later, we will take up the topic of the perfected mantra or *siddha mantra*.

Technique

The technique of japa yoga should be learned from a master in the beginning. It can be practised either with or without a mala. Japa is done on a rosary or *mala*, while ajapa is always done without a mala or an external support. In japa, the most important point is that you have to rotate your consciousness, although not necessarily in a circle, it may be in a triangle as well. After a certain amount of counts, your consciousness should return to the point at which it started. Let the consciousness rotate a number

of times, for instance, 108 times or more. It may be up to 1,080 times at a stretch or less, until your mind drops in. By the constant repetition of a mantra, with the assistance of touch sensation, the mind is easily caught in a trap and introverted.

Although japa may be practised at any time, the best time unanimously agreed upon is early in the morning before doing anything else. The next best time is at night and japa should be the last thing done before going to bed. Those who want to awaken their psychic powers should always practise japa at a particular time under the direction of a guru. Slight alteration is permissible for those who work hard to make both ends meet; time may be adjusted according to convenience and leisure. But, for the spiritual aspirant, it is absolutely necessary that he adheres to the specific instructions of his guru. Although japa is a relatively simple technique, it does require some time, patience, determination and will, as well as unbounded attention and faith.

Mantra diksha – initiation

Initiation is as necessary for a disciple as admission to kindergarten is for a child. Initiation is the first necessary thing, or requirement for the practice of japa yoga. The traditions say that you must have initiation either in person from a guru with proper ceremony or that you should receive it in a dream from a guru. The selection of a mantra depends upon the preference of the individual disciple. A mantra will be good and effective if the mind is very much impressed with it. If one likes his mantra and goes on repeating it, rhythmic vibrations are created.

When the mantra is received in a dream as a revelation, it leaves an especially deep impression or impact on the conscious mind. This is the first mantra of the disciple if he receives it so. It will undoubtedly be his personal wonder-working word that should never be changed. Very often the unconscious trends of the mind try to refute the faith you

have in your mantra. They should not be listened to. No destructive thought should be allowed to have an upper hand. The first mantra should be the last mantra in your life. This attitude will bring to you greater benefits. It is said, that 'through one mantra one knows the glory of all mantras'.

Ishta devata or the psychic symbol

A psychic symbol is also necessary to have by your side when the mind drops in through mantra japa. When you continue the rotation of your consciousness with the help of a mantra for many hundred times, consequently the mind will go in. Where will the mind rest when it goes inside? The psychic symbol will provide a resting place for it.

Ishta devata is the word generally used in Hindi for the psychic symbol. *Ishta* means 'the desired' and *devata* means 'the astral being'. Thus, the desired astral being is *ishta devata*. A mantra is a combination of different thought vibrations which create a definite form of the psychic symbol. The utterance of a mantra, verbal or mental and the sound vibrations radiating from it help to constitute the elements of psychic manifestation. The psychic symbol may be chosen either by yourself or by a guru who has made you aware of it in a dream or in waking consciousness.

All mantras, including guru mantras have this psychic symbol. This means that they all have a form that is psychic, not physical, which, for example, may be a deity or God. When the mantra is recited, the force and form created are radiation and reflection of your consciousness. When the mind goes in, the symbol serves as the resting place for the consciousness. In Sanskrit it is known as *murti*, which means the invisible materialization of the psychic forces.

Each and every mantra has its own particular symbol. *Aum*, for example, has its own sound vibrations and currents. Sound waves constitute a psychic sound which is one with the symbol. Every Sanskrit syllable, such as *ka*, *kha*, *ga*, has a different range of vibration. When they are arranged and put together to commune with each other, a specific psychic form

is created. They may even call forth an angel, flower or a particular smell. Historically, these symbols were propagated and conserved by the Aryan race.

Symbols are psychic formations that are in homogeneity with the physical existence of matter. It is imperative to choose a symbol that is in accordance with your liking, faith and intellectual conviction.

Malas

There are different kinds of malas or rosaries which are ordinarily composed of 108 beads plus the sumerini. The most popular and commonly used malas are: i) tulsi wood, ii) sandalwood, iii) crystal and iv) rudraksha. Tulsi wood beads are commonly used by those who worship Krishna, Rama or Vishnu, in order to attain Krishna consciousness or Christ consciousness. It is primarily beneficial for those aspirants who are pure vegetarian and very sensitive and who generate intense emotional vibrations in their circle.

The sandalwood rosary should not be used by emotional people as it is a sensitive medium for psychic vibrations. Its smell is sweet, yet sharp and it attracts the astral and psychic currents all around. Generally, people favour sandalwood next to tulsi wood.

Crystal beads are used to worship Devi, the divine shakti, for awakening the unseen and unconscious forces. These beads are powerful. Usually, the average sadhaka cannot stand the interplay and interaction of the cosmic currents reflecting through the quartz pieces.

Rudraksha beads are used for the worship of Lord Shiva in order to master raja yoga and meditation. The bead itself is the pith of a popular fruit grown in Nepal, which is supposedly the most powerful and essential thing for the practice of japa yoga. In India, they are also used in bangles and necklaces for the purpose of controlling magnetic currents of the blood stream and are frequently used for certain maladies relating to blood pressure, heartbeat, palpitation and insomnia.

Japa sadhana

There are five methods for the practice of japa:

1. *Vaikhari* – audible
2. *Upanshu* – in a whisper
3. *Manasika* – mental
4. *Likhit* – written
5. *Ajapa* – with breath and without a mala.

You may choose one or more than one of these methods for your personal use. In tantra shastra the tantra mantras are repeated or japa is performed according to specific instructions and stipulations. For example, the speed at which a mantra is recited, the tone of voice and so on, is all taken into consideration.

Vaikhari is the recitation of a mantra in a clear, sharp tone at one's natural pitch level. It should be chanted in a loud voice producing clear sound waves in order to have some effect on the brain. After doing this for a certain period of time, the mind becomes quiet and sublime.

Upanshu is the recitation of the mantra in a whisper so that no one else can hear. You also should barely hear it. The mantra is repeated through the movement of the lips and the contraction and expansion of the vocal cords, although no sound is produced. In this practice a little more attention is required than in the previous one, vaikhari, and the mental energies are more easily harnessed as a result.

In **manasika japa** there is no movement of any muscles or tissues, except movement of the mind waves. In this practice one has merely to repeat the mantra mentally.

Likhit japa is usually prescribed for the aspirant who has successfully performed other practices of japa with a degree of progress in concentration. Likhit is usually and most correctly done in a note book for several hundreds of times with red, blue or green ink. The letters should be as small as possible and written with utmost care, concentration and sense of beauty and proportion: the smaller the letters, the more the concentration. If all of these points are observed, likhit japa becomes higher than the mental japa. Likhit japa

is always followed by mental japa, because the writing of a mantra simultaneously requires mental repetition.

Ajapa is the next stage which should not be practised unless the previous methods are mastered. Ajapa requires no mala, pen, pencil or paper. You only have to become aware of your breathing cycle and repeat the mantra mentally along with your breath.

Manasika should not be practised unless vaikhari and upanshu have been somewhat mastered. Those who do not have a steady mind can not make substantial progress without the preliminary practices. If a person is dull and restless, and possesses a wavering tendency he should not begin the higher practices of japa. He will find himself dozing and his mala will slip out of his hand without notice or he may forget to rotate the beads in a proper rhythm. The aspirant should avoid sleep, unawareness and absent-mindedness. It has been observed that sometimes the aspirant forgets his mantra and repeats something else that is present in his subconscious. For the time being the mind is off the track; it wanders somewhere else, forgetting its main job of japa. Many times, the mind is not at all aware of its inertia.

Aspirants are often deluded and led to believe that they have a steady mind, but the moment they close their eyes during the vaikhari or upanshu they do not know where they are. If they are asked how they felt, immediately they will exclaim, "Oh, wonderful!" This only means that the mind was not functioning during the moments of sleep or when absent-mindedness had taken place. There is a way to know whether the mind was aware of the mantra at any point in question or entirely throughout the practice. Suppose I ask you to be aware of a red spot, what is the proof that you were fully and consciously aware of it? A number of times the mind might have blinked in between. When the mind is absent it loses the intellectual sequence of the words of the mantra. Audible repetition is very helpful to check these mistakes. It is easy to correct these mistakes right in the beginning on the conscious plane. If this is not done, later

on, the resulting confusions in psychic consciousness are incapable of rectification.

The audible repetition of a mantra is done to serve another purpose too. It is to charge the brain with sound vibrations. After doing *Hare Ram* for an hour, I often felt that a particular layer of my brain had been entirely removed. I used to feel charged with energy. This is a common experience of all aspirants. In therapeutic hypnotism the same principles are applied. If a person is asked to repeat a particular mantra for hours together, his mind attains a certain psychic level, a suggestive state of mind. If anything is suggested to him at that time he will follow it or will let it enter his mind. Those addicted to adverse habits can easily use this method to get rid of them.

A practitioner of japa yoga should always remain under the guidance of a guru who, according to tradition, is a good and benevolent man. He does not have limited and selfish motives. In India, a large number of people are initiated into the science of mantra by a guru. They only know that the guru is a man who will not exploit them in any way, whether mentally, socially, psychologically or physically. He is a *vairagi*, which means that he has gone beyond the limitation of personal interest. When these qualities prove satisfactory to a person, he is advised by his elders to be initiated by a guru. In India every girl and boy is supposed to be initiated into mantra by a guru on the day of their marriage. People believe that if they are not initiated in the science of mantra their evolution and salvation will be delayed. In India some time back, an uninitiated girl was not allowed to enter into the kitchen.

The purpose of japa is to attain a suggestive state of mind so that the guru can help you to attain spiritual progress. He cannot change your mind, but he can prescribe certain aids, because he is well-acquainted with the shortcomings and defects of people.

Through the practice of japa yoga you can bring about a psychic condition in which the conception of a

psychic symbol is easily imprinted. If you want to meditate on a particular object and you find it difficult, practise vaikhari and audible japa for one hour before going into meditation.

Vaikhari is often practised in chorus, that is, the audible repetition of mantras chanted in different tunes with different accompanying musical instruments. In some places, a mantra is sung without a break for years together. There are places where mantras have been going on for over 800 years. There are special trustees assigned to take care of this job. In Rishikesh, since 1943, *Hare Ram* has been sung continuously for twenty-four hours, day after day. To this day, there has been no break at all, even for one minute. I feel that mantra chanting creates an atmosphere woven with powerful currents. I recall, even now, the unbroken recitation of japa when I first joined Swami Sivananda's ashram. I went to meet Swamiji for the first time and happened to step into the large hall where the mantra was going on. I was at once impressed and felt myself being transformed into something else. The experience is something like a man who has been put into an air-conditioned chamber after toiling for long hours in the sun. I think that it was the communion with the magnetic atmosphere and a sensitive personality. As you can see, vaikhari is a powerful way of practising japa, as it releases a certain magnetism.

Upanshu is the recitation of the mantra in a whisper. It is recommended for those who want to practise their mantra for a long period of time, for example, eight to ten hours a day with a specific purpose in mind. According to the science of mantra shastra, a mantra can be used for correcting the errors of destiny and setting the wheel of life in order. Whether you think it to be true or not, people in general believe that various mantras can fulfil various purposes in life. To quote an example, I would like to mention the case of Sir John Woodroffe, the Justice of the Calcutta High Court. In one court case he could not give a final judgement against a person because of the wavering of his mind. He was simply

vexed at the state of his own mind because it was so unlike his nature.

At last he made personal enquiries into the matter and found out that the two parties being examined were both practising mantras on him in order to change his mind. Each time, he was overpowered by the mantras. In the end, this made Woodroffe take to the study of mantra and tantra shastra. As you know, he made intense research all over the world and is accredited as the first European to be well informed on this topic. This example is only one of many. I have told you this just to give you some idea of the effect and impact a mantra can have on the conscious and subconscious mind. Those who specialize in this area can even make objects move. For those purposes, there are specific mantras generally not revealed to the public. Tantra is a science of occultism in which the mind waves are converted into force and force into effect.

Likhit japa, as you recall, is a practice of mantra without a mala or audible sound. During the month of shravana, July to August, Hindus all over the world follow a tradition of plucking the leaves of the Bilva tree for the purpose of writing the mantra on these leaves. The Bilva tree is a special fruit tree having a hard-shelled fruit, something like a coconut, with each leaf containing three petals. There is some significance attached to the number of petals which are joined together. People usually write the mantra *Om Namah Shivaya* on these leaves with sandal paste or red powder paste. Then, the leaves are offered to a deity. This practice may continue for one complete month, in which they go on writing all day until it is too dark to write any more. The following morning they will go to the temple and offer each leaf with a verbal mantra recitation to their deity.

Ajapa is powerful if it is done after vaikhari, upanshu, manasika and likhit. It will have a supreme effect on the human mind if it is properly done and if the student has been prepared for it.

The ratio between vaikhari, upanshu and manasika should be 3:2:1. If you do three malas in vaikhari, rotate two malas in upanshu and one in manasika. This ratio can be increased according to the wish and leisure of the aspirant. The aspirant is always expected to have tremendous faith and enduring patience in all the practices from the time of initiation till the end, when he achieves success.

Effects of japa yoga

The influence of japa may be observed on i) the senses, ii) the mental activities, iii) the organic functioning of the body, iv) the psychic nature, v) the atmosphere and vi) the degree of spiritual awareness.

The practice of japa yoga is primarily meant for the awakening of psychic awareness in the average individual. Through the practice of japa certain effects are produced in the body. Japa is able to awaken the psychic body through the physical body. Unless there is some noticeable effect on the body, the mind or the senses, it is impossible and illogical to believe in the efficacy of this system. By the help of symptoms visible on the body we can know the nature of psychic awareness. We know that beyond the organs are the senses, beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the psyche and beyond the psyche is the spirit or *atman*, and that is to be aimed at in japa.

By the practice of japa one does not gain ground in the field of faith only. The change in convictions is not in imagination. Those who have made a thorough investigation in the area of psychology and parapsychology have asserted that there are definite changes to be noted in the human system. There have been numerous experiments conducted on the effect of sound on the human brain. Brainwaves that have been recorded are found to be different due to the sound waves of different vibrations. Later, scientists carried out successful experiments that proved that sound vibrations create forms. A number of parapsychologists and psychologists were astounded by the happenings and events

that took place. They found that thoughts could hit the mind of another person. Much data has been collected in this area by the Psychic Research Institute in Delhi. One question that caught the attention of the research workers was whether thoughts could travel. Through much experimentation and comparing of notes in and out of the country they came to the conclusion that strongly generated waves, if transmitted by a strong will, could travel to a person wherever he might be. They also concluded that thoughts could materialize into an object. Many confusing notions must be cleared in order to have a better understanding of japa, but there is no doubt that the speed and frequency of the vibrations do affect our thoughts.

Basically, there are five effects that can be noticed on the senses. By senses, I mean the five sense organs and the five working organs. The five sense organs are: the eyes, ears, nose, skin and tongue, relating to sight, sound, smell, touch and taste. The five working organs are: the hands, legs, mouth, and the two excretory and reproductive organs. It is noticed by many aspirants that the practice of japa produces a state of fainting in which there is a withdrawal of the senses. Actually, it is the senses that enter into a state of fainting. It is not exactly losing the consciousness, but may be termed as the withdrawal of activities or the receding of the senses to their source. This is beneficial, naturally, for the person who has turbulent senses. It will calm them down.

Secondly, the practice of japa yoga affects the mental activities. Japa done for hours and hours soothes the mind and removes any state of turmoil that may have been present. Anxieties, neurosis and other complexities of the mind will become defunct. The mind becomes calm and attains a state of perfect and sublime peace. This state of mind is similar to the effect of tranquillizers, except japa is abiding. It is like the effect of narcotics. People use these drugs to have some peace, but instead the mind becomes dull, depressed and calm, and the mental activities function temporarily at the lowest ebb, but during the period of japa

there is alertness in addition to other effects. In the case of narcotics, the lower tendencies of the mind retrograde to the subconscious level and deny fulfilment of the senses, but the practitioner of japa supercedes in many ways and the higher mind, which is more powerful, begins to function. This results in the tranquillization at the level of the physical senses. Throughout the practice, he is alert, aware and full of his own consciousness. At this time, the mind is absolutely free from passion, anger, jealousy, and so on. A person who is often suddenly overwhelmed by anxiety, doubtfulness, or restlessness can derive great benefit from this practice, even if he has no faith. If one practises for about ten to fifteen days, according to certain prescribed rules, he will immediately feel the benefits. Though he may not become a self-realized man, he will be free from false, projected, abnormal complexes. In order to attain tranquillity tempered with alertness and to gain a noble backlog of thoughts, there is nothing as good as japa.

Thirdly, the effect of japa can be seen on the organic process of the human body. The more the japa is performed, the more the metabolic count (speed) in the body is slowed down. Hence, this helps to retain youth for a longer period. In pranayama the case is quite different. In japa yoga, special asanas and exercises of pranayama are prescribed in addition to a regular light diet. For a special course of japa for more than a week a special diet is necessary. The diet controls the organic function in the system and helps to bring about the healthy effect of japa on the body, giving peace and rest to the heart.

Fourthly, japa produces an effect on the psychic nature of man. There is no doubt about it that man is essentially a psychic being. People should know this simple fact of life! Some people are psychically more developed, others are yet on the road and a few are sceptical and ignorant about the psychic nature in them. Man has inherited the psychic nature from the beginning of creation. Certain superstitions and religions are nothing but systems worked, unconsciously,

by a few advanced people on the basis of the human psychic nature. If men were not psychic, perhaps there would be no religion at all. In essence, the basis of our faith in God is proof of this psychic nature in man. Our conception of God is varied and there is no proof of His existence. We may have the conception of God as a scientist, philosopher or a punitive or sophisticated man. In some way or another, we all believe in God or the idea of God to some degree. Even those who are agnostic believe in God in their heart of hearts. If not, they begin to believe in phenomena such as telepathy and clairvoyance. By observation of this peculiar nature, a man makes us think that he is primarily psychic.

What is this psychic nature? It is hard to explain. Any indication or glimpse of any type of instructive knowledge in man about something that he has never seen, heard, done nor believed may be termed as psychic experience. He begins to hear and believe something that was never heard before. Those who have developed a faculty of this nature in their consciousness are termed 'psychic'. Instinctively and subconsciously, I believe, every man is psychic because he has developed this belief to some extent or has had a glimpse of the truth and is trying to discover it wholly. He feels that there is something beyond the physical universe. The inquiring or *jignasu* nature calls forth the necessity to know the invisible. Usually the enquiry is made within one's own self first and then more information is obtained from the elders and various books. Even the sceptic is aware of the psychic nature of man.

By the practice of japa, the glimpses of the psychic nature come to the conscious mind which was previously only hidden away and stored in the subconscious and unconscious. Hence, the more you practise japa the more you become aware of your psychic nature or psychic self. It may be said that japa undoubtedly improves the psychic nature of man.

As we discussed earlier, japa also influences an atmosphere or a place. There are many places in India to which 'illogical' beliefs have been attached that have been hitherto

found to be correct and verified. For example, there is a place where there are several poisonous vipers, yet not one death has been reported after a victim has been bitten. There is also a place where a snake comes on the full moon night, blesses people and then goes away. Once, while I was sitting with my eyes closed, I felt something like a cold wreath on my neck. A voice uttered, "Swamiji, do not be afraid. In this area and atmosphere the snake will not bite you." Outside that particular area the same snake may bite a man and kill him instantly. These are just a few examples of places influenced by the vibrations of the mantras.

It is difficult to say just what etheric currents flow and interact due to mantras, but a certain type of atmosphere does have the capacity to hypnotize a being, whether it be man, animal or insect. The subtle vibrations of japa transform the atmosphere of a place. The occultists have maintained, after thorough investigation, that man has a system of thinking that goes on even though man changes his thought from moment to moment, hour to hour and day to day. There are fundamental thought currents which slowly flow and work out the plans of evolution. These undercurrents of thought continuously bring about changes in the personality. The desires and the thoughts change the appearance of the aura colour. The subconscious impressions or desires make the personality and this personality radiates colours interwoven with the desires of the hidden self. In some cases the aura is very dark and dense. In some it is very light and pleasantly coloured. Many people can project their aura elsewhere. When mantras are practised, the radiation which continuously affects the aura of a person or a place is changed, improved and brightened. Even as the body is affected by the mantra, so is a place. Life and body, if saturated with a mantra, begin to radiate. This is a good reason to practise a mantra in a community for a month, year or longer. Anyone who is slightly sensitive can immediately feel the vibration of a holy place of pilgrimage.

Lastly, we come to the subject of improving or developing spiritual awareness through japa yoga. Spiritual awareness is higher than psychic awareness. Spiritual topics in India have nothing to do with the spiritualism of the West. Spiritual awareness is awareness of the self within. It is a state of unconsciousness to outer and objective consciousness. When one is conscious within, one is unconscious or unaware outside. Through the practice of japa one develops a kind of spiritual vision. Japa is something like a drug, but it is, in fact, not a drug at all. Its effects permeate the seen and the unseen personality of man. In the case of a drug, the effects are confined to the body. In the case of hypnotism, the hypnotic treatment is confined to the mind, but the effects of japa are not only confined to the body and mind. They are widespread and unlimited from the body to the inner, final self.

Japa anushthana: a psychic discipline through japa yoga

For the observance of japa as a psychic discipline one has to keep in mind the following seven points:

- a fixed time, place, seat and number of malas
- position of mala and direction
- weather
- diet
- duration of japa
- application of japa
- tantric reference.

These points are to be strictly followed if one wants to undergo a special psychic discipline known as, japa anushthana, yoga anushthana or mantra anushthana.

The word *anushthana* means a 'great performance' or an 'act of accomplishment with absolute maintenance of law and order'. An anushthana is a big plan of a great practice to be accomplished within a fixed time. One who wishes to undertake an anushthana should study and arrange the following things in advance:

- a specific time
- place

- asana
- resolution regarding the number of mantras
- type of mala
- adjustment with weather
- selection of a diet
- duration of one or a number of sittings
- other rules of discipline and
- type of japa anushtana.

Japa anushtana can be practised with either of these two purposes in mind: First, for the purification of the self, *atman* or *chitta*, for spiritual progress and to awaken the higher forces of kundalini. Second, for the attainment of a selfish purpose on the physical and material plane of consciousness, such as the gain of power, position or wealth, and the like.

Any practice that liberates the higher forces without giving us self-control is disastrous, therefore, the aspirant on the spiritual path will be required to practise japa or japa anushtana in a particular manner for the disciplining of the psychic body and psychic behaviour. By psychic disciplining, I mean disciplining a major range of the subconscious mind. If the latter is not observed, the mind, due to premature awakening of kundalini or the higher forces, becomes unbalanced. Just as there are physical disciplines and drills by which the physical body is brought under control through proper exercises, food and sleep, there are mental disciplines by which thoughts are processed and checked. Similarly, japa is performed for the disciplining of the psyche. The student gains control over voluntary habits, nerve reflexes and the state of his mind.

Next, the question of the selection of a mantra comes. When japa anushtana is performed for a spiritual end, the necessary qualification is to have *bhakti* or devotion, but if it is to be performed for the attainment of selfish ends or *siddhis*, perfection of psychic powers, it is a part of tantra shastra. *Tantra* means a secret technique and *shastra* means a science of scripture. In the first case, the aspirant may select his own mantra and type of anushtana or he might receive

the mantra or instructions in a dream or in meditation. Whichever way it is approached, it is advised that the help of a guru be sought in all cases; the guru is aware of the psychic personality, its defects and inclinations. These things are not known by the aspirant. If his emotions are unbalanced, he will react unfavourably and fail in his efforts. For example, the mantra of Durga is a powerful mantra which, if repeated correctly, releases great forces. Durga is a *devi*, which means Mother power. Her symbol stands as a figure to explain the basic truths of life and creation. The higher aspects of the unconscious are released by repeating the mantras of Durga. Those aspirants who have not learned how to control emotions or who have unbalanced mental faculties would definitely suffer in the arousal of hidden powers or force currents by mantra recitation.

There are other mantras, such as that of Rama, whose essential nature is to calm and soothe the mind. The Shiva mantra is usually helpful for the development of a sense of detachment, ecstasy and absolute indifference. One who develops these faculties is known as a *masta*. In Hindi, *masta* means a carefree man or a man overwhelmed with bliss.

An aspirant seeking to perform an anushtana for selfish ends should seek the help of an expert in the science of tantra. The tantric guru will initiate a deserving disciple into a particular mantra for achieving a particular aim. He will instruct even the minutest details pertaining to the ritual.

Pronunciation: To achieve the desired effect of a particular mantra, regardless of the purpose intended for, it is of the utmost importance that the pronunciation is correct, grammatically and phonetically, in the manner it was taught by the expert. Everywhere it is stated that the advice of a guru must be sought in all cases. A mantra can be selected from a book, but it should always be hooked to a bija mantra and both should be recited together. The bija mantra is only effective if it has been charged by the guru who gave it. The degree of effectiveness of a mantra depends upon the correct pronunciation generating powerful sound waves,

which will produce corresponding colours and in turn create the intended geometric forms and figures. This procedure should be intensified and accompanied by thought currents. Not only should there be correct pronunciation, but correct intonation, concentration, imagination and application of the creative mind.

Number or mantras of malas: In order to determine the correct number of times to repeat your mantra you must count the number of syllables in the mantra. If a mantra has five syllables, it should be repeated 500,000 times or one 100,000 times. A mantra with twelve letters should be repeated 1200,000 times. It means 100,000 times for each syllable. A mala or rosary in India contains 108 beads or pieces. One mantra is repeated for each bead, therefore, you repeat your mantra 108 times for the completion of one rotation of the mala or rosary. In fact, for one mala only one hundred mantras are registered, and the remaining eight are accepted as a margin for the ones that the aspirant might have missed. Therefore, one mala is equal to one hundred mantras and three malas for three hundred.

Time: The swiftest speed for a five-syllable mantra is assumed to be forty malas per hour. At this rate, it will take 125 hours to recite a mantra 500,000 times. At three hours a day it will take 41 days to recite a five-syllable mantra 500,000 times. One hundred and twenty-five hours can be divided in any number of sittings according to the convenience of the aspirant, but once the time is fixed for daily practice no alterations should be made.

Place and asana: In occult scriptures we find references to the law of the psychic nature. It is maintained that human beings constantly emanate a psychic substance that can be smelled and seen in the form of an aura. The psychic substance may be aromatic or foul-smelling. The selection of a place, seat or asana is always done considering the above points.

The asana and place selected for the anushtana should never be changed. Regular practice at the same place

charges the atmosphere with particular psychic vibrations. The same asana also emanates certain psychic currents from the body. As soon as you acquire the fixed place and position, the radiation of energy and vibration begins automatically. This helps the aspirant a great deal in his practice. An asana, cushion, can be either tiger or deer skin or a *kusha* mat, made of dry grass, or a new or fresh blanket. Anushthana for the purpose of purification requires deer skin, a blanket or a kusha asana, whereas in tantric anushthana either a tiger skin or kusha mat can be used.

Direction: The aspirant should always face either east or north while practising the anushthana. He should avoid facing the South Pole and the opposite direction of the rotation of the earth. Our earth rotates around the sun and the sun's rays and heat give vitality and strength. The North Pole is always attracted to the centre while the South is farther from the sun and the centre of gravitation in the solar system. Hence, in India, east and north are supposed to be good directions to perform important rituals and actions.

Mala: The selection of a mala depends upon the selection of a mantra. One may choose a tulsi, rudraksha, *sphatik*, crystal, or sandalwood mala, according to the specific mantra and purpose. A mala that is used for one specific mantra should never be used for any other mantra. A mala used for japa anushthana should never be used for wearing purposes. If a mala is broken and the beads are lost, it should be replaced with a new mala. Old malas should be disposed of in a well or in the Ganges water. A broken mala can be restrung with a silk thread. Gold, copper or silver threads should never be used.

Weather: Very hot or very cold weather is not good for the practice of japa anushthana. The most favourable time of the year in the Indian climate is considered to be from the 15th of July to the 15th of September.

Diet: The best diet during the time of japa anushthana is fruits and milk. This should be taken twice a day or as

suggested by the guru. If one has to practise japa anushthana for about fifteen days, a light Indian diet, such as puri, chapattis, green cooked vegetables, curd and milk (cow's milk is preferable) is recommended. Dinner must be light and must be taken before sunset. If one wishes to practise japa anushthana for more than a couple of months, a light diet twice a day is permissible. Foods such as puri, saag, milk, fruits, halva and dried fruits, excluding rice and chapattis are favourable. An acid or an alcoholic diet is absolutely forbidden. In the Western climate, milk, fruit, cheese and bread and butter preparations would be suitable. I know a European man who lived on milk alone for three years and who maintained perfect health.

If several anushthanas are performed continuously for a number of years, a spiritual force is released and the aspirant stores up a great deal of energy. Japa anushthana performed for spiritual progress and purification always releases energies that are used for higher greater ends.

If the anushthana is performed in accordance to tantra shastra, great energy is stored up, awaiting expression and manifestation. It involves a ritual practice which is always learned at the feet of a guru. Only deserving and devoted disciples are qualified to receive these instructions. If the guru finds the disciple pure in mind and devoted to humanity at large, he may ask the disciple to perform anushthana according to the tantras. Specific and personal instructions are given to release the power of mantras by observing the disciplines of the anushthana. Ten percent of the total number of mantras should be performed in addition to the prescribed number and this should be followed by offerings to the fire on the last day of anushthana. Tantra shastra is a branch of occultism in India whose mantra techniques we have just mentioned. It should be noted that the psychic energies released from these practices can be used either in a positive or a negative way.

During japa anushthana the posture can be changed if there is physical discomfort, but as a rule, the same posture

should be maintained for at least three hours at one stretch. After an interval of three hours, the practitioner can take a few minutes to relax. At night also, he can rest from three to five hours. The study of the scriptures or spiritual books, such as the Upanishads, may also be taken side by side with the practice of japa. In this case, one should devote eight hours to anushthana, eight hours to the study of scriptures and eight hours for rest, bath, and so on. Anushthana can be practised in upanishu, manasika or vaikhari, separately or mixed, according to one's wish. There should be a separate room for the anushthana and separate clothing for the practice. While going to the toilet the clothes and mala should not be worn, but should be left in the anushthana room. Also, it is best to have a complete bath after going to the toilet, as this will keep the subtle body pure and free from unhealthy vibrations carried by the clothes.

Meaning of mantra

People make a mistake if they think that mantras are a part of the language that must depend on the rules of grammar or make meaningful sentences. They think that Sanskrit is an ancient language and mantras were formulated by Sanskrit scholars, like any piece of literature. This is not true. Mantras have a mysterious origin. If they are composed they will be known as slokas and not mantras. A *sloka* means a 'verse'. The world-famous *Bhagavad Gita* and *Ramayana* are literary compositions, whereas mantras are never considered to be literary pieces. Slokas are written and spoken by a human mind, but through mantras, the occult sound mystery is revealed.

In fact, according to vedic etymology, mantras are revealed or released during profound meditation. The definition of mantra is, *mananat trayate iti mantrah*. *Mananat* means 'through profound meditation'. *Trayate* means 'that which liberates', *iti* means 'so is', *mantrah* means 'a mystic syllable'. Hence, *mantra* may be defined as 'a mystic syllable which has been revealed through profound meditation

that liberates a man from his conscious agonies'. Through symbols, various kinds of ideas, forces and impressions find expression within us. Mantras are symbols of the unconscious and are seldom revealed to anyone. Only a few powerful souls are chosen to receive them. A mantra is also defined as the sound of a word heard on the unconscious plane that has been recalled to the conscious plane. It is revealed when one is in a very deep psychic state or meditation in which one is completely lost to worldly experience. The consciousness of the outer self is lost and the inner light shines forth, not on a plane corresponding to the physical senses.

The *richa*, a series of compiled mantras, is often revealed and heard by the seer on the subconscious plane. Richas revealed in this manner were later recorded in black and white. Books prepared thus are part and parcel of Hindu religion. Even in other religions, many books were prepared on the basis of the inner voice and considered revelations. The Koran is an example of revealed knowledge. The Vedas are also nothing but revealed words of wisdom. The first letter of a mantra revealed to a rishi is always known as a *bija mantra* or seed mantra. For the first few days or weeks, one should listen to the first letter. For example, chant *kreem*, and try to listen to the vibrations of that sound. Ultimately, you will find that sound expressing itself in the form of a mantra. To explain, the bija mantra *hraum* should be followed by its mantra *om namah shivaya*. Some mantras have meaning and others have not. In mantra or tantra shastra the mantras were revealed and not composed. They seem to be different. It is due to the fact that the unconscious matter of everyone differs from each other, and hence, the imprisoned emanations from everyone will be different. Those people to whom mantras were revealed were called rishis. A *rishi* means 'the seer of the unconscious'. One attains rishihood just before samadhi.

The unconscious is not dead stuff. It is dynamic within, but the outer consciousness is not able to translate the impressions of the unconscious. I might say that many people mistake the directions of the unconscious for the

directions of God. If that were true, you could say that the unconscious is our God. Many writers have tried to maintain that the expression of God is actually the unconscious. Thus, many foreigners' conception of God has been psychologically equated. I feel that the unconscious is a great force. It is more powerful than our present state. It is neither void of consciousness nor is it a state of negation. It is a type of consciousness, but it is altogether different from the physical or waking consciousness. Every thought has a form, either geometrical or human. Every thought has a pitch or a high culminating point. Some thoughts are too subtle and their presence is unnoticed by the mind; you are not at all aware of them, although they reside in your unconscious. Thoughts have a certain quality of size or measurement. They are often big, loud and intense, yet cannot be heard physically. The human physical body is unable to conceive above, below and beyond a certain level.

Sometimes thoughts are so subtle that we only know them through their symbols. A therianthropic symbol is used in translating the impressions of the unconscious. A therianthropic symbol is a symbol having an animal and human body combined. All human thoughts have roots in animal memories. Some symbols are a body of a man having a fishtail or the lower body of a tiger or cobra. Many authorities have concluded that human thinking evolved while the animal instincts remained intact within man. In India, the conception of thought was anthropomorphic; the thoughts of the divine had human symbols. These human figures were both male and female. The Egyptians and other ancient races believed in geometrical signs of thought. This concept of geometrical symbols was adopted in India in the form of tantra shastra. For instance, the first symbol of the unconscious is an inverted triangle. The geometrical symbols were considered to be figures of thought. Thoughts not only have form and pitch, but also produce a particular pattern in the mind. If I think, "I would like to go to Calcutta," these words immediately bring thoughts of money, train and ticket

to the subconscious mind. Thoughts are not only in the shape of bubbles but are also triangular or even straight. From the original form they combine and form different shapes.

Mantras also have a form, which is known as mantra devata. *Devata* does not mean God, as is said in most of the dictionaries. The literal meaning is 'one who illumines'. This word has been derived from a root syllable *dyu* in Sanskrit, which is translated as 'enlighten' or 'illumine'. The primal sound means the sound not composed by man, but by nature. Therefore, a devata is an 'illuminated stuff'. Any object which is illuminated in darkness is devata. Like a torchlight, the conscious throws light on an object and that object becomes devata. During the state of unconscious samadhi, the rishi realizes two things: a mantra and a devata. Every revealed sound has a revealed symbol.

Whenever you accept a mantra or learn a mantra you should have the clearest idea of the mantra, devata, rishi, and the mantra's corresponding centres. The centres begin from the second, third, fourth and fifth fingers of both the hands. The palms, arms and both sides of the chest are also corresponding limbs or centres. Both sides of the chest are known as hridaya, which include the heart, eyes, shoulders and bindu. There is a process to touch all the centres with the mantra. The bija mantra touches the consciousness, while the fingers touch the centres on the body. The Christians have a similar practice, although it is not exactly done in the same manner. The purpose is to rotate the consciousness in all the different centres and to awaken the inert energy. This particular process is known as kara nyasa and anga nyasa. *Kara* means 'hands' and *nyasa* means 'to deposit' or 'to leave away'. *Anga* is another word for 'parts of the body'. We deposit and send the mantra consciousness into all parts of the body. When you do japa you create a certain amount of energy which is left behind or distributed in different parts of the body. Due to kara nyasa and anga nyasa the mantra energy remains in certain parts of the body until the japa is completed. You draw in your entire consciousness.

Regarding japa, I should also mention that invocation is very important. To invoke the higher forces, some prayers should be recited. These prayers are not like begging something from someone nor are they praises of a higher being; they are merely invocations. In Sanskrit and Hindi, there is a proper term used for such prayers. *Avahan* is this invocational prayer which literally means, “I am calling.” What you are actually doing is calling certain forces to help you in your task. There are special slokas which should be chanted in the beginning in the form of an invocation. The slokas display a clear-cut picture of a deity or a devata. For instance, the deity of learning is known as Mother Saraswati or Lakshmi. The description of the figure of the deity is lively and attractive. These deities have no geometrical symbols. The invocational prayers should be considered a part of japa yoga that should be recited in a clear tone. In japa there is a particular physical, psychic and esoteric act which is known as *visarjana*, which means ‘the end’. At the end of a japa anushthana, visarjana is done to finalize the sadhana. When you do visarjana, it conveys the idea of withdrawal of consciousness after the performance of an anushthana. The psychic power is called to attention through invocation and dispersed when not needed. It should not be released or scattered about without visarjana. The forces called upon and dispersed are to be controlled, as there may be repetitions on the psychic plane. As a result, many people who practise japa anushthana in an untraditional and unusual manner become a bit abnormal. The currents disturb the psychic pattern of the human mind. The technique of visarjana is always taught by the guru. It must be remembered that visarjana is done only after the anushthana is completed. It should never be done after the practice of ordinary japa.

Discussion of some specific points to be observed for the practice of japa

Japa can be done in practically any manner one likes, although it is desirable to observe the scientific rules enforced in the form of traditions. It is not only a matter of reciting the name of the Lord, but it deals with organic, inorganic and psychic functions within the body. Many people believe that they have only to recite the Lord's name and they think that God is pleased because he is remembered. However, I must ask, "Is God a human being like us who is pleased and displeased with trifling matters?" Well, this approach is wrong.

A mala is necessary and one should know how to hold it in one's fingers. God's name may be repeated with or without the mala, in the right or left hand, with the little finger or any other finger. In the practice of japa there is a correct way to hold the mala in between the fingers. Since the purpose of a mala is not to repeat God's name on the mala, but to awaken psychic awareness in the average individual, a specific method must be followed. For those who want to remember the Lord's name, it does not matter how it is done; for them, there is no rule whatsoever and their mala may have fifty or one thousand beads. For the practice of japa yoga there must be a certain number of beads in order to impress the psychic structure of man. Some of the practices enjoined with the practice of yoga are intended only to cater to the needs of the average individual's psychological nature.

The human psychic system is such that it does not remain steady for too long. Therefore, it becomes necessary to choose a medium or base through which you may know where you have blinked and where your fingers have missed the japa mantra. Even as milestones serve to know the distance covered, malas also play an important role in building up the psychic or spiritual road. It is a psychic requirement to keep the wavering psychic system under check and observation. The mala serves as a system of

checking or detecting the moments when the mind is absent. A mala also helps to know one's progress. Through gradual practice it aids in bringing about a calm and serene state of mind in which the fingers' movements and recitation of mantra are in tact. If the mala falls down, it is discovered that the mind has missed the connection. One may attain laya yoga through japa, which is a spiritual state where the mind is absent. If you have a mala, your fingers and mala will remain in tact during the period of laya or this spiritual state of mind.

It so happens that once I, as did many others, took, my absent-mindedness as samadhi. One evening at six o'clock I sat in padmasana with mala in hand ready for japa. After doing japa for a while my mind became absent and I woke up from my dharana stage at four in the morning. I became immediately happy thinking I had attained samadhi and rushed to tell my guru, Swami Sivananda. I told him, "Swamiji, I had samadhi for many long hours." He smiled at me and simply said, "It is very nice." I came back with a dull heart, not receiving the expected encouragement from Swamiji. Later on, he asked me whether I did japa throughout the time of my so-called samadhi state. He also asked me if I had a mala, to which I replied, "No." Swamiji said that, "You might or might not believe in a mala, nevertheless, it is an intellectual belief that during meditation and japa a mala is not a matter of belief or faith, but rather, a need." The wavering psychological mind needs a mala to put it under control. There must be a method to see whether the awareness is in tact or has gone blank. In the depth of consciousness it is impossible to remember anything. It is the continuity of the mala that will tell you your fingers were moving correctly while there was awareness of consciousness inside. If concentration is achieved through japa, the mala moves on and on in between the fingers at an even pace. When the awareness dawns, consciousness is active, alert and fully aware of its functions. Faith should not be an interference in the consideration of the need for a mala.

The 108 beads of a mala represent Supreme Consciousness and the creation. The 8 beads represent the eight-fold aspect of physical nature. The round stretch symbolizing 0 represents the cosmos, the entire galaxy of creation. The 100 beads represent various other elements of creation. There is also another interpretation of the figure 108. The 1 represents the one Universal Consciousness, the 0 is the universe of creation and the 8 represents the eight-fold aspect of creation. Some people think that 108 denotes 108 incarnations. In different religions, different figures are accepted as significant and psychic, for example, 5, 7, 9, 13. Similarly, in India, 108 is spiritually significant. It is considered holy, auspicious and a good omen.

One bead topping the 108 is known as meru which, of course, is not rotated. Meru is the bindu or point of consciousness, which the fingers should never cross, but should instead take a turn back. You must be careful not to repeat the mala in a circular form. The circle is to be broken at meru and the mala is to be rotated in the reverse direction at this point. Meru is meant for the revival of consciousness, as it is the reminder to the consciousness, to prevent you from losing awareness of your task.

While rotating the mala, three fingers are used, the thumb, the middle and the ring fingers of the right hand. They are allowed to handle one bead at a time. The little and index fingers should remain aloof. The bead is lightly suspended between the three fingers and serves the purpose of counting the mantras. When one mantra has been recited with one bead in the fingers, the other fingers should automatically pass on to the next bead, followed by the recitation of the mantra again. Practice of mantra for long hours is tiring to the fingers due to the weight of the mala. A cloth bag, *gomuk*, the shape of a right angle over-turned, may be specially stitched to support the hand and weight of the mala. You might have seen many people using such a bag.

While practising japa one should observe the flow of the nostrils. Through concentration and other methods, one

should see that the flow of both nostrils is equal. If the right is flowing and the left is blocked, you may start your practice, but if the left is flowing and the right is blocked, try to change the flow by leaning a little to the right side; resting your hand on something to support your body. Another way to alter the flow of the nostrils is to lie down on the opposite side of the nostril that is not free. For example, if your right nostril is not flowing, lie down on the left side and soon the right nostril will become free. The science is known as swara yoga.

Errors should be avoided in japa. The letters of mantras are arranged in a scientific order and if improperly chanted, will produce an adverse effect on both the body and the psyche. Japa should be done in seclusion and not in the company of others. In a monastery the case is different. At home a room must be reserved for spiritual practices. The aspirant should never be disturbed by others during his practice. Psychic energy through japa should be used for a definite purpose which you should decide in the beginning. It is a law that psychic acts are not to be performed in front of laymen or idle inquisitors. Therefore, secrecy is demanded throughout, although there is nothing to keep secret.

As mentioned earlier, the mantra should never be changed for the sake of avoiding confusion that can hardly be corrected. Therefore, the tradition holds that a disciple should have one guru and one mantra. One can change a husband or a wife, but never a guru or a mantra. Sometimes, sentiments interfere with your devotion and you think another mantra might be more powerful than your own. This may transpire subconsciously or unconsciously and interfere in your pattern. This should not take place. The first decision should be the last decision. The structure of the unconscious should be allowed to develop along one pattern or track and then, and only then, can the mantra become powerful and release energy. If you have any doubt you must seek the advice of one whom you believe in.

Over-enthusiasm in japa should be avoided, even though it is the easiest, cheapest and the best method for

self-realization. Too much japa can make one dull and too introvert. It is like a powerful medicine to be taken against the advice of a doctor. On the day of initiation or *diksha*, the guru sets the amount of japa to be done. The minimum and maximum is fixed. I was advised by my guru to do five malas when getting up in the morning, five after lunch, five after dinner and five just before going to sleep at night. It only takes me three minutes to recite it. So, these twelve minutes every day have trained my psyche to that point where it comes to me at the right time every day. This is called disciplining of the psyche. It is not the quantity that matters, but rather, the quality of dedication that counts. Introversion to an extent of dullness is not desirable.

Always be alert throughout your practice of japa. The intellectual awareness should be turned into spiritual awareness. Neither should the mind slip nor the faith or intellect start to brood. Try to train your nervous system gradually. You must start your prescribed japa at the right moment without consulting a watch.

Do not lend your mala to others. If you want to wear a mala on your neck, have another one instead of the one you use for japa. In tantra sadhana the practitioner is not allowed to proceed further if the mala is broken. It should immediately be replaced by a new one. For japa anushtana there should always be a spare mala.

In mantra recitation the grammatical articulation should be perfect as the recitation is also psychically recorded. The Vedas are always chanted in a particular manner. The articulation is done in two ways. The first one is the correct pronunciation of a verse according to the rules of grammar. But, there is another way: when the pitch of the tone changes between the first and the fifth accent.

In Indian music, the two notes, *sa* and *pa* have the corresponding chakras, mooladhara and vishuddhi. The method of articulation should be learned by the experts. What I mean to say is that the articulation should be perfect because it will also correspond with the psychic articulation.

If the articulation is not correct, it will not produce the desired effect and form within. Mantras that are selected from a book without the help of a guru will not be effective.

The left hand should never be used in the rotation of the mala, because it represents the weak, less active and negative force. The right hand stands for the positive force and is always used.

Japa should be done systematically and gradually, and the anushthana should be performed only once or twice a year. Over-enthusiasm will only bring harm to you. Between psychic introversion and spiritual introversion there is a slight difference. There is the reasoning mind, the aware mind and the feeling mind. When you become introvert and the intellect becomes weak in its functioning that is called an error in personality. You come across this all over the world. Then not only is the mind introvert, but the intellect too which is a psychic error. Spiritual introversion is the drawing-in of the mind to the point where the mind becomes one with the inner object without destroying the structure and without interfering with the intellectual process.

One should never make a show of his spiritual practices or experiences. Likewise, the mantra should never be told to anyone, as it is maintained that there will be a loss of efficacy and force. If you make a show of your practices, adverse thought currents emanating from the personalities of the inquisitors may disturb the peace of your mind. As a rule, spiritual practices are always private and personal in order to purify the visible sheaths of the human body. It is always better to lead a normal outer life in society without letting others know that you are a spiritual aspirant.

During some emergencies you may have to do japa without a mala; this should be the exception and not the general rule. Through japa, suppressed emotions, unfulfilled desires, passions, anger and greed can all be eliminated. Japa helps one in spiritual evolution. I do not mean to say that there should be no anger, greed, or lust, but rather that it should be transformed into spiritual

energy. For example, the nervous energy generated at the time of anger can be converted into enthusiasm and physical energy to fulfil the most difficult tasks in life. Likewise, emotions can always be used for higher purposes. Instead of suppressing those desires, try to transform them into spiritual energy through *japa*. One should have no conflict within himself, as it is likely to change into an abnormal manifestation or introversion. All vices are nothing but *shakti* or energy misdirected. Those having all amenities in life, such as, health, wealth, children, family, and so on, make very quick progress in the spiritual life. Often there is an accumulation of toxins in the body and psyche that should be released. When the mind goes in, sometimes it loses track of the spiritual path. It is always better to see that all your desires are fulfilled in the shortest amount of time.

It is good to lead a life of celibacy, but at the same time, there should be no suppressions. Up to the age of twenty-five, boys in India are asked to lead a celibate life, *brahmacharya*, under the direction of a guru. Then, they may return home and marry and raise children. After this householder life for twenty-five years, they are asked or advised to renounce life and take up the spiritual life. Some people are exceptions in life and need not go through the householder stage. They possess no worldly desires and lead an austere life from the very beginning. It is often found that people over forty are more calm and quiet than youngsters. Those who are over forty and still restless may be said to be unspiritual to a great extent. Spiritual life is the need of society; any amount of wealth, health, and so on, will never satisfy the never-appeasing appetite of the senses. Man is attached to society as long as he has wealth and health to pay the prices of the market. As soon as these fail to bring the glamour of the world to him, he feels lonely and outcast. One must have an ambition to lead a spiritual life; this is the prime need in one's life.

Although religion and yoga can not be divorced from each other, there is still a great difference. Yoga has a

secular approach, while religion has not. Yoga also asks you to maintain the disciplines of life, but not in the manner asked by a religion. Religion demands belief in God as a prerequisite, while yoga does not require this belief from any man. I have always advised people to continue their spiritual practices along with their householder life. Do your duty, raise your children, earn your bread and at the same time try to evolve spiritually. In India, this type of living is known as *anasakti yoga*, which means, leading an active life with an inner attitude of indifference. This is the best way to avoid the violent shocks of life. Many people suffer only due to wrong attachment. It is effectiveness and ineffectiveness both, like the two sides of a coin. One should not mistake it as escapism or total indifference.

Mantras

There are thirty-four Gayatri, comprising of the following twenty-three deities, some of them having more than one Gayatri, namely:

Ganesha	The Lord of good omens
Brahma	The Lord of creation
Vishnu	The Lord of Protection
Narasimha	God in an anthropomorphic form
Garuda	God in the symbol of an eagle
Rudra	The Lord of destruction
Nandikeshwar	The Lord in form of a bull
Shanmukhi	The six-headed Lord
Surya	Lord sun
Durga	Mother Goddess
Rama	One of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu
Hanuman	The Lord symbolizing intellect and dedication
Krishna	The Lord of love
Gopal	God as a child
Parashurama	God of energy
Dakshinamurti	Lord of the South Pole

Guru	The master
Hayagriva	God in form of a human and horse figure combined
Brahma and Saraswati	God and Goddess of learning
Lakshmi	Goddess of wealth
Shakti	The Mother power
Annapoorna	Deity of prosperity
Kalika	Deity of fear

The thirty-four Gayatris are:

1. Om ekadantaya vidmahe vakratundaya dheemahi,
Tanno dantih prachodayat.
2. Om tatpurushaya vidmahe vakratundaya dheemahi,
Tanno dantih prachodayat.
3. Om vedatmanaya vidmahe hiranyagarbhaya dheemahi,
Tanno brahma prachodayat.
4. Om chaturmukhaya vidmahe kamandaludharaya
dheemahi, Tanno brahma prachodayat.
5. Om narayanaya vidmahe vasudevaya dheemahi, Tanno
vishnuh prachodayat.
6. Om vajranakhaya vidmahe tikshnadamshtaya
dheemahi, Tanno nrisimhah prachodayat.
7. Om nrisimhaya vidmahe vajranakhaya dheemahi.
Tanno simhah prachodayat.
8. Om tatpurushaya vidmahe suvarnapakshaya dheemahi,
Tanno garudah prachodayat.
9. Om tatpurushaya vidmahe mahadevaya dheemahi,
Tanno rudrah prachodayat.
10. Om tatpurushasya vidmahe sahasrakshaya mahadeveya
dheemahi, Tanno rudrah prachodayat.
11. Om tatpurushaya vidmahe nandikeshvaraya dheemahi,
Tanno vrishabhah prachodayat.
12. Om tatpurushaya vidmahe mahasenaya dheemahi.
Tanno skandah prachodayat.
13. Om shanmukhaya vidmahe mahasenaya dheemahi,
Tanno shashthah prachodayat.

14. Om bhaskaraya vidmahe mahadyutikaraya dheemahi,
Tanno adityah prachodayat.
15. Om adityaya vidmahe sahasrakiranaya dheemahi,
Tanno bhanuh prachodayat.
16. Om prabhakaraya vidmahe divakaraya dheemahi,
Tanno suryah prachodayat.
17. Om katyayanyai vidmahe kanyakumaryai Dheemahi,
Tanno Durga Prachodayat.
18. Om Mahashulinyai Vidmahe Mahadurgayai dheemahi,
Tanno bhagavatee prachodayat.
19. Om dasharathaya vidmahe sitavallabhaya dheemahi,
Tanno ramach prachodayat.
20. Om anjaneyaya vidmahe vayuputraya dheemahi,
Tanno hanuman prachodayat.
21. Om devakinandanaya vidmahe, vasudevaya dheemahi,
Tanno krishnah prachodayat.
22. Om gopalaya vidmahe, gopijanavallabhaya dheemahi,
Tanno gopalah prachodayat.
23. Om jamadagnaye vidmahe, mahaviraya dheemahi,
Tanno parashuramah prachodayat.
24. Om dakshinamurtaye vidmahe, dhyanaasthaya
dheemahi, Tanno dheeshah prachodayat.
25. Om gurudevaya vidmahe, parabrahmane dheemahi,
Tanno guruh prachodayat.
26. Om hamsaya vidmahe, paramahamsaya dheemahi,
Tanno hamsah prachodayat.
27. Om paramahamsaya vidmahe, mahatattvaya
dheemahi, Tanno hamsah prachodayat.
28. Om vagishvaraya vidmahe, hayagrivaya dheemahi,
Tanno hamsah prachodayat.
29. Om parameshvaraya vidmahe, paratattvaya dheemahi,
Tanno brahma prachodayat.
30. Om vagdevyai cha vidmahe, kamarajaya dheemahi,
Tanno devi prachodayat.
31. Om mahadevyai cha vidmahe, vishnupatnyai cha
dheemahi, Tanno lakshmih prachodayat.

32. Om sarvasammohinyai vidmahe, vishvajanyai dheemahi, Tanno shaktih prachodayat.
33. Om bhagvatyai cha vidmahe, maheshvaryai cha dheemahi, Tanno annapurna prachodayat.
34. Om kalikayai cha vidmahe, shmashanavasinyai dheemahi, Tanno aghorah prachodayat.

The following are the bija mantras of different deities:

<i>Aum</i>	This is the symbolic sound of the Cosmic Being.
<i>Haum</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Cosmic Shiva.
<i>Daum</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Durga.
<i>Kreem</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Kali
<i>Hreem</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Mahamaya.
<i>Shreem</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Lakshmi.
<i>Aim</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Saraswati.
<i>Kleem</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Krishna.
<i>Hoom</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Bhairava.
<i>Gam</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Ganesha.
<i>Glaum</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Ganesha also.
<i>Kshraum</i>	This is the symbolic sound of Narasimha.

Without a bija mantra, mantras are not supposed to be effective. The bija mantra is received from a guru in a traditional way.

Mantras are a combination of many sound waves. Unlike English and Urdu, each one of the Sanskrit alphabets has only one phonetic sound. These alphabets generate sound waves. When articulation is necessary, one of the sixteen vowels is added to the alphabet. In no other language of the world is there such a scientific sound arrangement as in the Sanskrit language, which supposedly is the oldest language in the world. Therefore, mantras are not to be thought of as simply words formulating sentences. There is a systematic arrangement in order to suit the purpose. The ancient linguists or inventors of this language had a complete knowledge of the sound waves and they converted them into a particular mode of articulation to create certain vibrations. The alphabets of mantras are known in Sanskrit as, *akshara*,

or 'that which is imperishable'. Science has now proved that sound waves are never extinguished, as the vibrations are ever present in the atmosphere that could be collected and transmitted from any distance.

The alphabets are known as *varnas*, which means that they have a colour. Sound waves have a colour also. Once a word is pronounced, it becomes an immortal word. Each and every word creates a form and that form is imperishable. It is a form with colour. The mantras create their own arranged sets of vibrations and once recited they are out of the shaft like an arrow which has already sprung from the bow. These sound waves keep on travelling unto infinity until they become completely mutilated. At times these waves come in touch with other waves and cause friction. Sensitive minds are able to receive them by chance. This is known as telepathy. Also, during deep meditation, one is able to catch a few sounds from the cosmic currents. It is not possible to get each and every sound back after many years. Science may reveal at a later stage that some of the old speeches made by prophets have been recorded in the cosmic recorder. These waves can be plotted after many centuries. Just as minerals are found and processed, sound vibrations could be arranged to form a complete speech, after being collected and arranged. This is only to make clear that mantra is nothing but a collection of sound waves.

The varna *va* represents water and similarly, each and every alphabet, varna, has its own wave, form and colour. The colour of *ra* is red, *la* is yellow and *va* is white. *Na* is crystal and appears bluish. These colours join each other when words are spoken. Many books dealing with this science were written by the scholars of India. So, when you take up mantra or japa yoga, never try to go into grammatical details, but try to understand them from the psychic and spiritual point of view. Tantra shastra will give you a complete picture of the *varnas*. The rhythm of the mantras with the phonetic pitch, which is up and down, is also very important. They can only be taught when the disciple learns them directly from the teacher.

First published in 1973, *Ajapa Japa and Chidakasha Dharana* is presented before the reader by Swami Satyananda as precious practices of self-discovery.

Ajapa Japa

The sadhana of ajapa is as old as the Upanishads. In some of the old Upanishads on yoga like the *Yogashiksha*, you will find some passages and stanzas which declare that the breath goes in with the sound of *So* and comes out with the sound *Ham*. This is the Ajapa Gayatri which the *jiva*, the individual soul, continuously repeats.

Valmiki was initiated by Narada in *ulta nama*, which is this very ajapa. Even now those who follow the nirguna pantha sampradaya like Radha Swami Pantha, Kabir Pantha practise ajapa. The ancient sages also practised this ajapa. Gandhiji too has written in his books that the name should come out from within the heart and not only from the mouth. When the name comes out from the mouth, it is called japa; when it comes out from the heart, it is called ajapa. Gandhiji explained ajapa in his own way.

Ajapa is a very important sadhana and through it one can have direct experience of samadhi. In order to attain samadhi by all other yogic practices one has to control the breath, thus the breath is to be suspended and kumbhaka takes place. However, the breathing system remains normal in the continuous practice of ajapa and even in samadhi there is no change.

Ajapa is a part of kriya yoga. According to Rishi Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, kriya yoga is *tapas*, *swadhyaya* and *Ishwara pranidhana*, austerity, self-study and complete

dedication to the Lord. In Sanskrit, this stage of ajapa is called as *viloma ajapa*, inverted or reverse ajapa. A Muslim saint, Kabir, referring to this ajapa has said, "I am experiencing the fourth dimension of consciousness." Again, he has said, "This awareness of *Ham* starts from *nabhi chakra*, the navel centre or *manipura chakra*. When it comes out, it is reversed." You produce *Ham* from the *nabhi chakra* and, when it has been completely produced, you reverse it by *So*. Now it becomes *Ham-So*.

There are certain practices in yoga where one becomes introvert; there is an automatic suspension of breath. The difficulty is that the aspirant becomes extrovert after a little meditation if the capacity of the lungs is not adequate. This difficulty is with many of us. In the practice of ajapa, however, this difficulty is solved. Secondly, the ajapa practice is complete in itself.

Those who have read the *Yoga Sutras* of Rishi Patanjali know that first of all one has to concentrate on a concrete object. When the concentration on a concrete object is complete with open eyes, one must meditate on it with closed eyes. This is concentration on a subtle thing. After that, when concentration is complete on a subtle thing, one must concentrate on the simple awareness of its presence. Just as when a school boy goes to the higher class he dispenses with the books of the lower class, even so in yoga one has to take up a certain practice and then give it up when success is achieved in that practice; this happens when one is able to make good progress in *sadhana*.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* (4:29) there is a clear reference about ajapa:

*Apaane juhvati praanam praane'paanam tathaa'pare;
Praanaapaana gatee ruddhwaa praanaayaama paraayanaah.*

Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the courses of the outgoing and the incoming breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of the breath.

This means, some merge prana in apana. Others apana in prana; yet others merge prana in prana. Prana is the ingoing breath; apana is the outgoing breath. *So* represents prana and *Ham* represents apana. Some aspirants merge prana with apana they join *So* with *Ham* which becomes *So-Ham*. Other aspirants join apana with prana, they join *Ham* with *So* which becomes *Ham-So*. There are other sadhakas who join prana with prana. This practice will be dealt with later. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (5:27) there is one more reference to ajapa:

*Sparsaan kritvaa bahir baahyaamschakshus chaivaantare bhruvoh;
Praanaapaanau samau kritvaa naasaabhyantara chaarinau.*

Shutting out all external contacts and fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, equalizing the outgoing and incoming breaths moving within the nostrils . . .

Thus, the practice of ajapa is most important and has been referred to in the shastras. It is complete in itself and through it one can enter the spiritual realms even without the help of a guru.

There are six stages in yoga called savitarka samapatti and nirvitarka samapatti, savichara and nirvichara samadhi, anandanugata and asmitanugata samadhi. Every aspirant in every spiritual practice has to know for himself as to which the first is and which the next stage is. Most of the yogic exercises of concentration are not as complete as ajapa. There are six stages in ajapa. If you merely take *So-Ham* for ajapa, you can complete all the six stages in *So-Ham* itself.

In the successful practice of trataka, one gets inner visualization of the object one meditates upon, but after that the way closes. Therefore, you cannot reach the stage of samadhi all by yourself, with the help of other yogic practices. You need a guru to tell you what the next practice is. In the case of ajapa, however, you do not need a guru.

It is said that one should do the *anahada japa*, a japa which will never end. It must be co-extensive with infinity. Well, we do not know any mantra as such. Therefore, there should be a method of repeating the mantra so that it does not end. This is achieved through the practice of *ajapa japa* when the mantra is adjusted with the breathing process, and thus its awareness continues all throughout.

Before I tell you about the actual practice of *ajapa*, let me explain to you one more thing. If your hand gets hurt and I ask you if you feel the pain, you will reply in the affirmative, but where is the pain? You will say that it is in your hand. This is locating the pain. In yoga also there is a process of locating consciousness.

Let me ask you where your consciousness is. Think for yourself for a few minutes as to where you are. You do not know where you are. Your awareness or consciousness now is extrovert and dissipated, but it can be located at any particular centre of your body.

Suppose you suddenly see a light on your mental plane while you are meditating. You see it for a second. In yogic language, this is called locating the consciousness. This is an important fact in the path of spiritual progress. It is through this process that the yogis transmit their consciousness. We normally do not know as to where our astral body is. Through the practice of *ajapa* you will be able to know where your awareness is.

There were two birds, black and white, tied to a peg with two ropes. They flew for a while but had to come back, since they were tied. Thus they flew many times. Ultimately, they got tired and slept peacefully near the peg.

The above-mentioned illustration refers to *ida* and *pingala*. They are two birds, as it were. The flow in the right nostril corresponds to *pingala* or *surya nadi* and the flow in the left nostril corresponds to *ida* or *chandra nadi*. The alternate functioning of *ida* and *pingala* keeps one away from one's inner consciousness. So long as they alternately work, *samadhi* cannot be attained. It is only when the two

birds, ida and pingala, are tired and retire at the centre, the heart or the self, that sushumna awakens and the process of meditation becomes automatic.

According to swara yoga, when both of the nostrils flow equally it indicates that the sushumna is flowing. At this time one should give up all worldly work and meditate. It is a common experience that sometimes the meditation is wonderful. It is because there is harmony in the entire system. When sushumna does not function, one does not get concentration even with efforts. It is important that the functioning of ida and pingala should be in harmony by meditating on them, thus making it possible for sushumna to function.

In order to stop the chain of thoughts, one has to observe the thoughts. One has to consciously see them. During ajapa, you must have a complete and unceasing awareness of what you are doing. Like the oil-stream which does not break in the middle, let your consciousness be also continuous. This is called *swadhyaya*. Here *swadhyaya* does not mean spiritual studies. It means continuous awareness of what you are doing.

The next important point in ajapa is that one should keep the mind fixed at the centre of meditation. It may be either ajna chakra or anahata chakra or any other centre of the body. It is called *Ishwara pranidhana* or fixing the mind at a particular centre which you have chosen for your objective meditation.

Then three things are very important in ajapa: *tapasya* or sustained endurance, *swadhyaya* or self-observation all throughout and *Ishwara pranidhana* or fixing the mind on the centre of meditation.

Three important points of the ajapa practice are i) deep breathing, ii) relaxation and iii) total awareness. Not a single breath should go unnoticed. There should be no automatic breathing. You must have unceasing awareness of every ingoing and outgoing breath. Thus, ajapa is adjusting a mantra to the breathing process. It can be practised

anywhere, in the chair, on the floor or in any *asana* or posture, such as *padmasana*, *siddhasana* or *sukhasana*.

The important point in *ajapa* is that first of all you have to breathe in and out consciously and not automatically. Automatic breathing goes on at night also. It is not *ajapa*. You must consciously notice every ingoing and outgoing breath. Like a watchman, watch the continuous and unceasing consciousness of the two breaths. You must also observe how far the breath is going in. When you breathe the air goes down to the navel. When you breathe out it comes from the navel.

Lie down and feel as if you are going to sleep. You should breathe like a person who breathes deeply in deep sleep. After a few days practice, your breathing will be complete, systematic and proportionate. The normal rate of inhalation and exhalation is fifteen times a minute, so in one hour, nine hundred breaths and in twenty-four hours 21,600 breaths. A person who has perfected *ajapa* will do 21,600 rounds of *japa* per day. As and when the concentration becomes deep, the breathing will become slow. Instead of fifteen rounds, you will do ten rounds a minute. In *ajapa* you make the breath as long as and as deep as you do when you are snoring. Longevity is increased by doing so.

Now, we come to the technical side of *ajapa*. There is no great technical difficulty in doing *ajapa*. The only difficulty is *tapas*, which means sustained endurance. You must sit in one posture. The body should not shake and the mind should not run here and there. It is not physical mortification. It is sustained endurance. If you pledge that you will do *ajapa* for forty-five minutes every day and one day you do it, but the next you lose patience; the third day you will lose interest and the fourth day lose everything. Keep up your resolve and continue your practice with patience for at least one month.

Sit in a comfortable posture. Relax yourself. Take to deep breathing. Then join *So* with the ingoing breath and *Ham* with the outgoing breath. Feel that you are introspecting upon *So-Ham*. There should be no mental pause between *So* and *Ham*. There should be continuity. After *Ham* pause a

little. Breathe in with *So*, breathe out with *Ham*. This makes one round of *So-Ham*. There should be continuous awareness of i) the ingoing and outgoing breath and ii) *So-Ham*.

After some time stop ajapa and just go into blankness or shoonya. Take your mind to the place in between the two eyebrows, *trikuti*, and concentrate on ajna chakra. You can also meditate on the *hridaya chakra*, the heart chakra, if you like. Think of nothing. Just become blank. Whatever thoughts come to you, keep on removing them. Only think of shoonya. The vritti is to be visualized in the centre of meditation. Let this be for a couple of minutes. After that again start ajapa. In ajapa, first there will be concentration on the two streams of breath followed by synchronizing the *So-Ham*. You can adjust any other mantra you like with the breathing process.

There is a misunderstanding about the *So-Ham* mantra. *So-Ham* does not mean 'I am That'; *So* is the introspective sound of the ingoing breath while the vibrations that are created in the outgoing breath sound like *Ham*. It is not *ahamgraha upasana*, or the meditation where one identifies with the Supreme Being. *So-Ham* merely indicates the complete circuit of introspection upon the two breaths. You need not at all think of the literal meaning of the word *So-Ham*.

Practice

First stage: Relax physically and mentally for a few minutes.

Make yourself as light and relaxed as possible. Keep aside for a while all your worries and problems. Feel calmness and serenity, peace and bliss; complete mental relaxation before you start the practice of ajapa.

Feel that you are sitting comfortably. Become aware of the aforesaid breathing. Be conscious of every ingoing and outgoing breath. The ingoing breath goes to the navel and the outgoing breath comes from the navel region. No automatic breathing, but conscious, deep and relaxed breathing.

Do not produce any sound while breathing. Feel the two streams of breath. Intensify the awareness of prana.

Now add *So-Ham* to this, continue to breathe in and out and try to synchronize *So-Ham* with it. Maintain unceasing awareness of the prana and the mantra.

Now centralize your consciousness either in trikuti, ajna chakra, or in anahata chakra. Stop thinking. Centralize your awareness. Create a mental vacuum. Set aside all thoughts. Simple awareness of a particular centre should be maintained. Continue breathing consciously in and out.

Start *So-Ham* with the ingoing and outgoing breaths as usual. Continue this practice for some time. Practise this first stage of ajapa for a month. After you perfect it, go to the second stage of ajapa.

Second stage: During the first practice of ajapa, you introspected upon *So* with ingoing breath and *Ham* with outgoing breath. Now, in the second practice, reverse the whole process. Introspect upon *Ham* while exhaling and upon *So* while inhaling. There should be no pause between *Ham* and *So*. After *Ham-So* there will be a little pause. Be conscious of *Ham-So* all throughout. *Ham* is the introspective sound vibration of the outgoing prana and *So* the vibration of the ingoing prana.

After the ajapa of *Ham-So* become blank. Do not think of anything. Take your consciousness either to ajna chakra or anahata chakra. There should be total awareness of the centre of meditation. Do not put any pressure on the centre. Simply concentrate your mind there.

The process of deep breathing, relaxation, total awareness will be the same in this second practice of *Ham-So* as in the practice of *So-Ham*. One may practise this *Ham-So* for a month. After getting success in it, turn to the third stage of ajapa.

Third stage: In the first practice of ajapa, you formulated your consciousness in the pattern of *So-Ham*. In the second practice, you reversed it to *Ham-So*. Now we come to the third practice.

Relax yourself mentally. The relaxation can be successfully achieved by autosuggestion and by awakening the awareness of 'I am'.

If one has terrible tensions then there is another method of relaxation through counting. Count one with the ingoing breath. Count one with the outgoing breath. Count two with the ingoing breath. Count two with the outgoing breath. Go on counting like this till four. When you come to five, be alert. Foster collective consciousness and undistracted awareness. Feel that you are definitely counting five. Say mentally, "I am aware of five with the ingoing breath and I am aware of five with the outgoing breath." Then go on counting till nine. Again, when you come to ten, be alert. Maintain fullest awareness that you are counting ten. Repeat this whole process a couple of times.

Now, start rhythmic and deep breathing, absolutely peaceful, prolonged and relaxed breathing. Practise mindfulness all throughout the process of breathing.

Again start breathing consciously and continue the practice of individual *So* and individual *Ham* for a month or so.

Fourth stage: Close your eyes and sit in a steady posture.

Mentally relax yourself by autosuggestion, self-awareness and by the feeling of peace, happiness and bliss.

Start rhythmic breathing. Breathe in and out from the navel. Be aware of the different stations through which your breath passes right from the nose to the navel and from navel to the nose. Rhythmic, soundless, peaceful and relaxed breathing. Maintain a thorough consciousness.

Now, *So* with the ingoing breath and *Ham* with the outgoing breath, but the form of your consciousness will be a continuity: *So-Ham-Ham-So*. *So* merging in *Ham* and *Ham* merging in *So*, thus making an endless circle.

Prolong the vibrations of *Ham* and join them with the vibrations of the ingoing *So*. Prolong the vibrations of

So and join them with those of *Ham*. Thus, alternately introspecting on *So-Ham-Ham-So*. The latter part of *Ham* joins the early part of *So* and becomes a continuous circle of *So-Ham-Ham-So*. Continuous introspection of *So-Ham* and *Ham-So*; no break either in *So-Ham* or in *Ham-So*.

Now, stop this practice and empty your mind. Create blankness. Focus your consciousness on any of the centres of meditation. Remove all thoughts.

Again, after some time start the endless circle of *So-Ham-Ham-So*.

At the end of the practice of an hour or half, heighten your imagination of peace and rest. Feel mentally: *anandam*, *parama*, *sukham*, *shanti*, *mangalam*, bliss, final beatitude, happiness, peace, auspiciousness.

All these practices of ajapa are mental and not verbal.

Fifth stage: The four practices of ajapa have been explained. Now, we go to the fifth stage which is rather more difficult and commands great imagination on the part of the sadhaka. It consists of rotating the consciousness in the spinal column.

The process of concentration and meditation consists of two factors: annihilation of the external consciousness and expression of the calm and quiet *atman*, spirit, in us.

A burning lamp cannot give full illumination if its glass is covered with smoke. It is only when the glass is cleaned that the lamp shines fully. Similarly, the light or the power of the *atman* is within us, but it does not manifest itself in our daily life because of the hindrances of the thinking principle, the vagaries of the mind, and dissipations and distractions.

Meditation helps one to annihilate the sense-consciousness and awaken self-awareness. It removes the impurities of the mind. There are different systems of meditation. The first meditation belongs to the group of the body; the second meditation belongs to the group of the mind, like thinking of an idea. The third meditation belongs to the group of the intellect and the fourth process of meditation belongs to the higher regions.

The light manifests itself when the physical consciousness, the mental consciousness, the intellectual awareness and lastly the ego personality itself are all annihilated in toto. So long as you do not transcend the body, the mind and the intellect, you will not attain perfect serenity and peace. The various practices of ajapa aim at achieving this end.

In an academic career one has to go through the primary, higher secondary, college and university education in order to get the highest degree. Even so, in meditation there are four stages. First is relaxation, second is awareness, third is unification and the fourth is forgetfulness. This has been explained in the previous practices of ajapa.

Now we come to the fifth stage of ajapa, which is a higher practice. The first important point in the practice of ajapa is rhythmic breathing the second important point is mindfulness. All throughout the process of meditation, you must be mindful of every activity you do. If while practising meditation you forget that you are meditating, you will never have success in meditation.

While meditating, there comes a state of *tandra*, weariness and sleepiness, and this is the trouble with almost every aspirant who meditates. You keep on thinking of a certain problem for fifteen minutes or so. During this period, when you were brooding over the problem, you were not mindful that you were brooding. It is only when you finish the process of brooding that you realize that you were thinking about such a problem. This is not meditation.

In meditation, concentration is not as important as the mindfulness. Therefore, I always emphasize one point, "Be aware of what you are doing. Be conscious you are counting. Be mindfully aware that you are visualizing or breathing. In short, be absolutely awake and vigilant." You have to be conscious of every process of breathing and mindfulness should be unceasing and unobstructed. This is called unceasing continuity.

In meditation, if you count one, two, three, your mind should not wander even for a single second. Even if it

wanders, let it, but be aware that it is wandering. If you concentrate, be aware that you are concentrating. It is the very nature of the mind to wander and slip. You need not worry about this, but be aware of every tendency of the mind.

Whenever your mind, your consciousness, your awareness dissipates, be alert. No mental activity should go unnoticed. You should never be unmindful of the processes of concentration. This is the fundamental and the only point in meditation to be remembered. If you fail to remember and understand this most important point, you will never have success in meditation even if you meditate for a century.

The second point is rhythmic breathing through the spinal passage and mindfulness. Third is rotation of the vibrations of *So* and *Ham* through the spinal passage.

It is a psychological fact that when you want to control the mind, it wanders ruthlessly and you fail to control it, but if you quietly watch the mental activities, they will immediately stop. Therefore, in all the four practices of ajapa, I have tried to impress upon you this truth that, instead of commanding the mind to stop forcibly, you should become mindful of its every activity.

You have been given the practice of rhythmic breathing, mindfulness, synchronization of bija mantra with the ingoing and outgoing breaths and lastly of creating temporary blankness of the mind.

In the fifth stage of ajapa, you have to use a lot of imagination in the beginning. Later on, it will become a real process. In the previous practices you introspected with the breath going in down to the navel and with the breath coming out from the navel. Now, you have to change this process and circulate your consciousness in the spinal column through the six chakras. The six chakras are, starting from the bottom: mooladhara, swadhisthana, manipura, anahata, vishuddhi, ajna.

Practice

Fifth stage: First relax mentally and physically. Sit in a comfortable posture. Take rhythmic and prolonged breaths. Be mindful all throughout. Now take the breath to the ajna chakra, then to vishuddhi chakra, anahata chakra, manipura chakra, swadhisthana chakra and lastly to the mooladhara chakra. Circulate the breath-consciousness from the ajna chakra to the mooladhara chakra through the spinal passage.

Now, retain your consciousness in the mooladhara chakra for a while. Locate the inverted triangle and within it kundalini. Kundalini is the dormant potentiality in us which sleeps like a snake at the base of the spinal column in coils. It is the centre of *purusha*, *atma*, the soul. In the framework of the triangle is the kundalini, its tail is upwards and its mouth is downwards. Meditate on this kundalini for a few seconds.

Now inhale from mooladhara chakra, through the spinal column and the six chakras. With simple rotation of the breathing consciousness in the spinal column add *So* and *Ham* to the inhalation and exhalation respectively. The passage of consciousness will be the spinal column and the centre of consciousness will be the mooladhara chakra, its triangle and the kundalini within it.

Say *So* while breathing in. Take the vibrations of *So* to the mooladhara chakra, from mooladhara through the spinal column go on to ajna chakra. Retain the breath consciousness there for a while. Meditate on the eyebrow centre.

Now, with the mental vibrations of *Ham* go on exhaling through the spinal column. With the vibrations of *So* you ascend in the spinal passage and with the vibrations of *Ham* you descend in the spinal passage. The descending passage is from ajna chakra to mooladhara chakra and the ascending passage is from mooladhara chakra to ajna chakra.

After you exhale with *Ham*, take some rest. Just be aware of yourself. Do not create blankness.

To sum up, with the vibration of *So* you ascend in the spinal column, there you retain and remain at the *bhrumadhya*, the eyebrow centre, for a few seconds, then you descend the spinal column with the vibration of *Ham* and exhale. After exhalation you take rest and locate the kundalini at the mooladhara chakra.

Thus, the fifth practice of ajapa consists of rotating the consciousness in the ascending and descending passages of the spinal column with the vibrations of *So* and *Ham*. First is relaxation. Second is rhythmic breathing through the spinal passage and mindfulness. Third is rotation of the vibrations of *So* and *Ham* through the spinal passage. Fourth is retention in mooladhara chakra and meditation on a triangle with its base upside and the serpentine power encased.

Be constantly aware of the ascending consciousness, then the descending consciousness and lastly centralizing the consciousness. When you exhale, it is called descending consciousness. When you meditate on the mooladhara chakra, it is locating or centralizing the consciousness. When you inhale, it is called the ascending consciousness.

In this practice of ajapa, the important things to be considered are rhythmic breathing, heightened imagination, perfect and continuous mindfulness, complete relaxation and awareness of what you are doing. The best method of mental relaxation is self-awareness and autosuggestion.

Rotating the consciousness seems to be a little difficult in the beginning because it requires great imagination, but with a little practice, later on, it becomes quite real and easy.

This practice is very important because if one can do it successfully, one will have peace, serenity, good dreams and a change in mental outlook. It is said that the person whose kundalini awakens has peace first and knowledge next. This meditation should be considered as successful if the

practitioner obtains peace and wisdom. This being over, we come to the last stage.

Practice

Sixth stage: This practice is more difficult and requires greater imagination, patience and control of the breathing process. Take a comfortable posture. Sit straight with your spinal column erect. Interlock your hands and keep them on your lap or on your knees. Loosen your clothes. Remove your tie, wristwatch, ring and socks. Set aside all your mental tensions and worries. Practise self-awareness. Give autosuggestions. Imagine peace and joy, thus relax yourself completely.

Now, with your thumbs plug your ears. Close your eyes and lips with your fingers. Take to deep breathing. After you have taken the breath in, close also your nostrils.

Then, rotate your consciousness in the spinal column. With the vibrations of *Ham* descend from ajna chakra to mooladhara chakra and with the vibrations of *So* ascend from mooladhara chakra. Then, release the breath and take a little rest. During this period of rest, practise self-awareness and mindfulness.

In the second stage of the sixth practice of ajapa, you need not close your ears, eyes, mouth and nose. Simply breathe in. Retain. During the period of retention, rotate your consciousness in the spinal column, from mooladhara chakra to ajna chakra. Stay at ajna chakra for a while. Now descend while you exhale. Take rest and practise self-awareness.

Conclusion

We have completed the elaborate exposition of all the six meditations of ajapa. Through these practices, the method of disintegration of consciousness through mindful concentration upon the breath was propounded. You must practise right from the first meditation and gradually go to the last practice.

Out of these practices, you can conveniently practise the first four practices at home every day without any difficulty. The fifth exercise is a bit difficult in the sense that it requires sufficient power of imagination or *dharana shakti*. It will take you some time to have success in the fifth stage of ajapa, but once you are successful in it, the sixth stage will become much easier to practise.

This exposition of the method of ajapa japa, being practical, not much has been said here of the psychological significance of this kriya. It is, however, not to be forgotten that ajapa japa offers a permanent cure for all mental disorders and its therapeutic significance can hardly be over-emphasized.

Ajapa japa kriya has also a sacred significance which has been hinted at in several cryptic and mystic formulas in our ancient scriptures. Discussions of these and other important aspects of ajapa can only be understood well after one has gained the experience of the prolonged practice of ajapa.



Ajapa Japa is an important meditation practice by which we can 'plough' our psyche and make it fertile and receptive. Another name for ajapa is 'spontaneous awareness'.

When the mantra is awakened with the breath the whole body is recharged. Psychic toxins are eliminated and blocks in the nadis which are the main source of physical and mental disturbances are removed. The sound, the mantra, permeate each and every particle of the body.

—Swami Satyananda Saraswati

Chidakasha Dharana

Of the several sadhanas prescribed for the perfection of yoga, with a view to attain the highest state of union with the infinite or pure consciousness, chidakasha dharana is regarded as one of the most important and significant of sadhanas. It includes several different types of yoga techniques and if a sincere sadhaka with perfect devotion, faith and diligence pursues its practice regularly, he will soon be rewarded with experiences of a subtle and mystical character which will encourage him to go in for higher stages of meditation. Ultimately, when it is rightly pursued and perfected, this sadhana provides, as it were, the great springboard which will enable the sadhaka to take a jump to higher flights of spiritual illumination.

Though yoga is essentially a matter of experimentation and practical realization and not a technique susceptible to intellectual comprehension by knowledge of a purely theoretical character, it will be easier for a sadhaka to practise the sadhana if he is aware of the underlying meaning and significance of the various techniques employed and the aim and purpose of the sadhana. It is with this view, therefore, that an attempt is made in this essay to explain, in as brief and lucid a manner as possible, the background of this sadhana and its significance.

What is yoga?

Before we enter into a detailed discussion explaining the significance of the different elements which together constitute this sadhana, it is necessary to have a correct understanding of the term yoga. This word yoga has been mostly misunderstood or incorrectly apprehended. For some uninformed, but otherwise intelligent minds, yoga merely represents a technique full of extremely difficult and painful physical exercises of hatha yoga. Now here the first misconception arises from the inability to understand the meaning of the word hatha yoga. This yoga does not mean an unintelligent and obstinate technique of physically torturing and twisting the body or lying down on a bed of sharp pointed spikes or even lying buried in a pit for a number of days. For, all these do not constitute any part of the technique of yoga. The term hatha is made up of *ha* and *tha* which represent the sun and the moon, or the solar and the lunar currents of breath in the body respectively. The unification of these positive and negative currents, channelling them to the central flow through sushumna in order to awaken the potent yet dormant consciousness represented by the kundalini shakti, and taking it to the realm of pure consciousness is the aim of this branch of yoga. Therefore, none need to be afraid that it is a technique which requires the body to be put to great trouble.

There is still another class of people who believe wrongly that yoga means a severance with life of the world and the taking up of a life of rigid exclusion. This is also a wrong view. Yoga, rightly speaking, is the art and the science of living, and with the advance in the field of modern psychology and the dissections into the many facets of human personality, it is now realized that yoga is an important technique which not only serves to cure errors in the personality of man but also has a psychophysiological importance. Apart from its supremely spiritual side it has as well a practical psychological side. It helps to integrate the disrupted personality of man by integrating the forces of

the body, mind and intellect by removing various tensions, and to reintegrate him to the eternal source of his being, his infinite self. Therefore, the primary preparatory stages, the ethical (yamas and niyamas), the physical (asanas), and the mental-emotional (pranayama and pratyahara) aspects of yoga help to retone and refashion the entire personality of man and to make him fit for worldly advancements. Its higher stages of dharana, dhyana and samadhi lead him to spiritual enlightenment if he so desires. The external as well as the internal elements of yoga described above are of considerable importance to man for fulfilling his mission in life. The chidakasha dharana combines in its practice both these functions, and therefore, acquires a singularly unique character. If a sadhaka is not to pursue it for a long time and is inclined to leave it after some time, even then he will find that his entire personality was being unconsciously moulded, reshaped and refashioned by this practice.

What is chidakasha?

It will be our attempt to explain the various terms and their significance or importance before we come to describing the actual practice, and therefore, we shall first discuss the meaning and importance of the term of chidakasha.

The word *chidakasha* is made of chit plus akasha, which means the inner firmament of consciousness. *Chit* means consciousness and when we say firmament, *akasha*, we imply an infinite space or the expanse of consciousness from its limited horizon to infinity. In other words, the extension of consciousness from the field of the limited objective universe to the infinite realms of the cosmos is the meaning of chidakasha. Here it must be remembered that chit is not to be confused with chitta. The latter is one of the constituents of anatahkarana, which is composed of the manas, buddhi, chitta and ahamkara. Chit here means consciousness. *Chidakasha dharana* is the technique by which the individual consciousness, which is playing in and is tied down to the world of grossness, is to be made subtler

and expansive and taken to the realms of infinite or pure consciousness.

The term akasha means sky or space which is endless. The Smritis have described three kinds of akasha: the ordinary akasha, the *chittakasha*, the sky of the mind, and the *chidakasha*, the sky of the intelligence. The latter is by far the most subtle since it implies pure and absolute unconditioned consciousness. The Yoga Upanishads, however, refer to five kinds of akasha. These are i) the akasha, ii) the parakasha, iii) the mahakasha, iv) the tattwakasha and v) the suryakasha. Of these, the first represents the natural sky which is endless and seen objectively. The second, *parakasha*, symbolizes the darkness which pervades inside and outside; the third, *mahakasha*, represents the fire-like glow which is experienced within and without; the fourth, *tattwakasha*, represents the experience of the essence of the inner individual self-enclosed in space; and the last, *suryakasha*, represents the form of the pure self which is radiant like the splendour of a hundred thousand suns.

These are all the stages of dharana through which the sadhana has to pass from one stage to another. This is a matter of practical realization, but these akashas have been described by way of information for those who wish to pursue the subject from a higher spiritual standpoint. Chidakasha dharana covers in a sense, the *vyoma panchaka*, the five subtle spaces within consciousness, described above and is, therefore, more important.

Here it is necessary to understand the meaning of the word dharana. In the *Yoga Sutras* of Rishi Patanjali, *dharana* has been defined as the fixing of mental faculties in one region or on a single objective. In other words, the mind has to be one-pointed or in the *ekagra* stage as opposed to its three preceding stages: *kshipta* distracted, *mudha*, inert, *vikshipta*, alternating between steadiness and distraction. To make the mind steady on one objective is the meaning of the word dharana and the yoga sadhanas include various types of dharanas. The *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad* mentions

sixteen *adharas*, three *lakshyas* and the five *akashas*. We have described the five *akashas* which form the objectives of *dharana*. Besides, there are three *lakshyas*, objectives, which are classified as internal, external and middle. The sixteen *adharas*, foundations, refer to the sixteen psychic centres of consciousness which are comparatively secondary in relation to the other main centres described later. For preparing the mind by the method of *dharana* and leading it to the stage of contemplation and thence to *samadhi*, these centres are regarded as useful. *Yoga sadhana* requires a patient and assiduous practice to reach perfection, for after all, its goal is union with pure consciousness.

In the practice of this *chidakasha dharana*, the first step is to chant *Aum* thirteen times. At the end of the *sadhana* also it has to be repeated thirteen times. It will, therefore, be of interest to understand the significance of this particular aspect.

The significance and importance of *Aum*

In the mantra shastras, *Aum* is regarded as the *setu* or bridge. Whenever any mantra is to be repeated it has to be preceded by *Aum* and ended with *Aum*. Then only the chanting of the mantra is said to be complete. Therefore, *Aum* is regarded as the dam which holds the power of the mantra. It is claimed that the mantra will be *chaitanya*, or alive, and reveal its potency only if it is recited in this way. The chanting in this *sadhana* has similar import.

However, apart from that, *Aum* has a wider and deeper meaning. In Sage Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, *Aum* has been defined as the symbol of *Ishwara*, the supreme reality. It has also been stated that since *Ishwara pranidhana* is a part of *kriya yoga*, the chanting of this syllable with an abiding awareness of its meaning is necessary. Since ancient times, *Aum* has been accepted as the symbol of the *Paramatman*, the Supreme Self. If the syllable is separated and analyzed, it will be found that it is composed of four *matras*, measures, the A, the U, the M and the *ardha chandra*, half moon, with the bindu.

The *Mandukyopanishad*, as well as some of the Yoga Upanishads, discuss in detail the meaning of this symbol. The *Aum* is the symbol of pure consciousness and its matras represent the gross or subtle manifestations of the great power of the *purusha* which manifests itself in this universe. The Upanishads say that the three matras represent the three *lokas*, dimensions, *bhu*, *bhuvaha* and *swaha*, the three Vedas, Rigveda, Yajurveda, and Samaveda, and the three states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping. The fourth matra represents the transcendental state or the eternal Brahman. It is said that the *A* is symbolic of the waking state, the *U* of the dream state, the *M* of the sleep state. The places of the matras are in the eyes in the first stage, because it is with the eyes that we see the gross universe, in the throat in the second, dream state, and in the heart in the last stage. *A* represents the gross, the *vishva* or *virat*, the cosmos and the individual self, *U* the subtle or the Hiranyagarbha or *tejas*, the subtle body as opposed to the physical, and *M* the causal state or the *prajna* or the unmanifest. *A* represents Brahma and the *rajoguna* because of the activity of creation; the *U* represents *sattwa*, and Vishnu, the sustainer, and *M* represents Rudra, the destroyer, and *tamoguna*. The *pranava* or sacred *Aum* in essence, being the highest transcendental entity, Brahma merges with the *A* matra, Vishnu with the *U* matra and Rudra with the *M* matra. The gross, subtle and the causal, Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra or three states of *ichha*, will, *jnana*, knowledge, and *kriya*, action, are all the gross or subtle form of the self same *purusha*, pure *chaitanya*, or consciousness.

In the body the six centres from mooladhara to ajna represent the five *maha bhootas*, elements, and the five subtle elements. The chanting of the syllable *Aum* from the base, or mooladhara with earth as its element, in such a manner that the vibrations roll on from the psychic passage of sushumna to sahasrara, is prescribed with a view to lift the consciousness from the gross plane of the earth and all that is earthly, to the higher, transcendental plane.

Further, the chanting of *Aum* and the vibrations it creates has the effect of removing sloth, inertia and indolence which a sadhaka may feel in the starting stage of his sadhana. The injunction to repeat it at the end is also done with a view to bring out the sadhaka from the meditative state in a fit, introvert condition with a sense of peace and bliss. The atmosphere and the imperceptible, yet definite, state of mind which the practice of this sadhana creates have to be kept up and not diffused suddenly by extroversion. The sadhaka will continue to remain in a peaceful, enjoyable and stable mental state even after he finishes the sadhana and goes about doing his normal work.

Chakra anusandhana

The chakras are the centres of consciousness and *anusandhana* means joining with or associating with them. It means that the individual consciousness of the sadhaka has to be related to the cosmic consciousness by a process of introversion and synchronization with the subtle centres of consciousness where the divine power in an unawakened state resides.

In chidakasha dharana mention is made of eleven chakras to which consciousness is to be related and through which it has to be rotated till the next stage of *chakra bhedan*, piercing of the chakras, is reached. These eleven centres are i) nasikagra, the tip of the nose, ii) bhrumadhya, the centre of the eyebrows, iii) chidakasha, the space behind the forehead where with eyes closed darkness is seen, iv) sahasrara, the crown lotus, v) bindu, near the top of the head, vi) ajna chakra, behind the centre of the eyebrows at the back of the head, vii) vishuddhi, at the throat at the beginning of the spinal column, viii) anahata, in the spinal column behind the heart, ix) manipura, in the navel region in the spinal column, x) swadhisthana, at the base of the spinal column and xi) mooladhara, between the anal region and the genital organ. It should be remembered that these eleven centres are not gross or physical organisms, but are extremely subtle and can be experienced by yoga sadhana.

We shall describe these centres one by one to have a proper understanding of them.

1. **Nasikagra:** This is the tip of the nose. The flow of ida and pingala, the lunar and solar, or the positive and negative currents of breath in the system is through the two nostrils. The nose is also the organ of smell, and smell is the attribute of the earth, one of the five gross elements, *pancha maha bhootas*. The consciousness has first to be located in this centre. If dharana is practised only on this centre, it is claimed that the yogi is able to smell the different perfumes, in other words, he is aware of the cosmic subtle elements which go to make perfumes.

2. **Bhrumadhya:** This is the centre between the eyebrows. It is said in the yoga shastras that sushumna, which is the most important nadi in the system, has its origin in sahasrara and the mouth in mooladhara. When it reaches ajna chakra it is bifurcated into two, one section of which passes through bhrumadhya and the other goes from the back of the head, but both meet in sahasrara. Thus the yogi has to take his consciousness from the tip of the nose next to bhrumadhya. It is said that concentration on this centre has the effect of bringing about the control of the mind. The yogis concentrate on this point, and a reference is also made in the *Bhagavad Gita* by Sri Krishna when he says that the yogis take their prana or consciousness in this region.

3. **Chidakasha:** This is the inner firmament, which has been explained before. The consciousness has also to be related to this region, for finally it will have to be retained there. The sadhaka, therefore, must first locate his consciousness in this region.

4. **Sahasrara:** This is the crown lotus. It is at the top of the head and is a lotus with a thousand petals. The petals bear all possible articulations of the alphabet from *A* to *Ksha*, fifty letters. In the middle of the lotus is the full moon. This centre no longer belongs to the plane of the body and is, therefore, transcendent. Its deity is the Param Sadashiva, Parabrahma with Mahashakti. It is here that the

kundalini ends after passing through the six centres. As this centre is the plane of transcendence, normally when chakras are referred to, mention is only made of the six from mooladhara to ajna.

5. **Bindu:** This term requires a more detailed explanation. The yogic literature refers to this bindu in many ways. It is first described as *parabindu*, the symbol of Sadashiva, pure consciousness. The whole universe, according to Samkhya philosophy has emanated from out of prakriti. The Samkhya system enunciates two fundamental principles, purusha and prakriti. Purusha is described as the parabindu, the transcendental state. Prakriti is unintelligent and changing as opposed to purusha, who is permanent, changeless, formless and intelligent. So long as the prakriti is in repose there is no creation. The first subtle movement of prakriti towards expansion, resulting ultimately in creation, represents the manifestation of the power of purusha through prakriti. The tantra shastras hold that there is no Shiva without Shakti, and there can be no Shakti without Shiva. So prakriti is the shakti of Shiva.

The parabindu at the first *spandan*, movement, divides itself into three aspect: nada, bindu and bija. *Nada* is the first produced, subtlest movement. *Bindu* represents shakti ready to create and *bija* the creative source. Thus the bindu represents the subtlest of the manifestations of the creative power. This extended universe, which emanates from prakriti or shakti, goes back at the time of dissolution to the original state or point, the bindu, which is a symbol taken from the world of objective form. It is an aspect of consciousness and is interpreted in terms of everyday consciousness, for the bindu implies 'the void and the *guna*, the conditions of complete equilibrium and of creative consciousness'. The bindu is also described as *chidghana* or dense, massive consciousness from which individualized consciousness emanates. In its highest state it abides near the sahasrara and is in the nature of Shiva, or the parabindu, or as the undivided and undifferentiated principle. On the material

plane, this bindu, which is the creative and sustaining power, is related to the physical system of which the *Yoga Chudamani Upanishad* speaks.

Thus the sadhaka, when rotating his consciousness on the bindu, has to understand its importance, for it is neither a gross nor subtle chakra, but is symbolic of the ultimate principle.

The entire universe emanates, as said before, from prakriti, which in its first movement manifests as mahat, from which buddhi emanates, from it ahamkara, and from ahamkara the five subtle *tanmatras*, the elements (*shabda*, *sparsa*, *roopa*, *rasa* and *gandha*, sound, touch, form, taste and smell), five organs of sensation (ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose), from these the five organs of action (hands, feet, speech, anus and genital organ), and the mind and the five gross elements of the earth. The evolution thus caused following the cosmic laws again involutes, in the reverse manner, until prakriti comes to the stage of complete equilibrium. This is symbolic of the Shiva-Shakti aspect, and as with the cosmos, so with the individual. According to this logic the entire process is symbolized in the six main centres which represent the gradations of consciousness and its subtler planes.

Kundalini shakti represents the conscious power. This consciousness is lying dormant and inactive in the lower region, in mooladhara, and the aim of yoga is to raise it and merge it with the highest state of pure consciousness. Chidakasha dharana is one of the forms of sadhana which aims at the awakening of kundalini, or in other words, lifting the consciousness from its sensual plane to the highest plane. This discussion has been necessitated by the fact that the consciousness has to be rotated through the various centres and the sadhaka should be aware of the reasons for doing so, for at all times he has to keep an abiding awareness as a witness of the practice he is doing. Such an awareness will remain with him only if he is conscious of the importance of the various aspects of this dharana.

6. **Ajna chakra:** It is situated between the eyebrows and the back of the skull and is a lotus with two petals with the letters *ham* and *ksham*, representing the Shiva and Shakti aspects. Its tattwa is *Aum* and it is the seat of cognitive faculties. Its deity is Paramshiva with the Shakti Hakini. Its colour is smoky silvery. Its loka is the tapah loka. Here in the middle of a white triangle is the *itara lingam*, the black lingam.

7. **Vishuddhi chakra:** It is situated in the region of the throat at the junction of the spinal column. It is a lotus of sixteen petals with the words *A, AA, E, EE*, and so on, of smoky purple colour. Its element is the akasha, like the full moon. Its attribute is sound and the vayu is udana. Its deity is the Sadashiva with the Shakti Shakini. Its loka is the janah loka.

8. **Anahata chakra:** It is situated in the region of the heart and is of blue colour. It is like a lotus which has twelve petals with the letters *Kam, Kham, Gam, Gham*, and so on. Its element is the prana. Its deity is Ishana with the Shakti Kakini. There is, in a golden triangle the lingam called the bana. It is related to the element of air, sense of touch, and its loka is the maha loka.

9. **Manipura chakra:** It is situated in the lumbar region at the level of the navel. It is conceived as a yellow lotus with ten petals with the letters *D, Dh, T, Th, N, P, Ph* with the bindu, so as to read *Dam*, etc. Its colour is red as its element is fire and samana the vayu. Its deity is Rudra with the Lakini Devi, and the loka is swara loka. It is related to the fire, the sun, rajas, the sense of sight.

10. **Swadhisthana chakra:** This centre is situated at the base of the genital region near the pelvic region. It is conceived as a lotus with six petals of vermillion colour with six letters: *Bam, Bham, Ram, Yam, Sham* and *Lam*. Its element is water symbolized by the white crescent moon. Its attribute is rasa. Its vayu is vyana and the presiding deity Vishnu with his Shakti Shakini. The loka is the bhuvah loka. This centre is related to the element water, the prana, taste, and the hands.

11. **Mooladhara chakra:** This is the lowest centre. It is located below the genital region and is conceived as a lotus of four petals with the words *Vam*, *Sam*, *Sham*, and *Sam*. Its bija mantra is *Lam*. It is related to the earth and its colour is red. Its presiding deity is Brahma, some say Ganesha, with his Shakti Dakini. The swayambhu shivalingam with face downwards is situated there. Its vayu is apana. Its loka is the bhu loka.

This short description of the centres of consciousness will be enough to indicate the central thought. It is that human consciousness is involved in the process of the extension of the creative power, *shakti*, in the lower sensual plane. It lies coiled at the base. It is the potential dynamic power which has not exhausted its potentiality, but is at rest in the lower centre. This is the kundalini shakti, an aspect of consciousness. The aim of yoga and the various yoga sadhanas is to awaken this shakti and lead it from the realms of sensual consciousness to the plane of transcendental consciousness, sahasrara. It has to ascend through the six planes to reach the last lap of its journey through the passage of the sushumna.

In this sadhana, therefore, the sadhaka is made aware at the initial stage of the various centres, so that when he practises his sadhana he is able to locate the centres and later to investigate them to realize for himself the sensation which he experiences when he attempts to rotate his consciousness through these centres. Chakra anusandhana thus constitutes the preliminary stage.

Chakra bhedan

After the sadhaka has been able to bring his extrovert consciousness to bear on these centres by introversion, the process comes of trying to pierce these centres. The practice is to be performed by the technique of ujjayi pranayama.

This pranayama is one of the principal pranayamas. There are as such twenty-one different kinds of pranayama, but the ujjayi occupies a special place. *Prana* here does

not mean breath or air which we take in, but is the vital life energy, the cosmic energy which gives life to the entire creation. *Pranayama* does not only mean control of breath, but it also means regulating, lengthening and steadying the flow of prana. In *ujjayi* the breath is to be drawn in through the throat passage and exhaled accordingly. It has the effect of purifying the nadis. Thus when the process of inspiration takes place, the *sadhaka* has to imagine that the breath, which is also consciousness, passes through the first five centres from *nasikagra* to *bindu*, and then when exhaling through the rest of the centres, from *ajna* to *mooladhara*. Here the *sadhaka* has to heighten his imagination or make his consciousness more refined and subtle. As a matter of fact, his mind should have become introvert in the first process and if, with awakened consciousness, he tries to rotate his breath through these centres he will soon feel the sensation of doing so. At the same time, the striking of the centres with the pranic force will activate these centres to an extent and he may, if he is fully conscious and does not go into the *laya* stage (in which case he will miss the experience), realize this.

The Yoga Upanishads declare that the individual *jiva*, spirit, is drawn up and down by the prana and apana and is thus tossed to and fro and, therefore, is ever restless. The *jiva* here represents the individual consciousness, and as there is a vital connection between the mind and the breath, it becomes imperatively necessary that the breath is properly regulated. Thus, the *sadhaka* is supposed to have practised *pranayama* in the preparatory stages before he embarks on this *sadhana*. With the help of the prana *sadhana*, the consciousness is not to be content with the awareness of the *chakras*, but it has to be made to pass through the various centres. This effort has to be a conscious and steady one all the time. At no stage should the *sadhaka* be absent-minded and allow the practice to run on mechanically.

Having explained the import of the principal factors which comprise this *sadhana* we shall now indicate in detail

the method by which this sadhana is to be practised by a sadhaka. The practice consists of the following stages:

1. Taking up the correct posture, asana
2. Chanting of *Aum*
3. Chakra anusandhana
4. Chakra bhedan
5. Dharana, or fixing the mind on chidakasha which consists of five stages.
6. Visualizing the ishta in chidakasha
7. Chanting of *Aum*
8. Prayer
9. Practising nirvichara state, or the state of suspension of thought processes where the mind is to be cleared of all thoughts.
10. Shubha sankalpa, or stabilizing the mind with the help of buddhi to some good ideal to be pursued in everyday life.
11. Contemplation on the import of the sadhana.

The first requirement of any sadhana is that the aspirant should sit in a comfortable posture in a quiet place. Comfortable asana is necessary because the sadhana necessarily takes some time and if the sadhaka suffers from pain or discomfort in the body because he is not used to such a posture, his consciousness which would have become introvert will be extrovert and concentration will break. Therefore, the sadhaka should preferably sit in the padmasana or the siddhasana posture. If this is not possible, swastikasana may be adopted, though for meditation purposes the first two are considered by yogis to be the best.

After he has seated himself comfortably with a quiet mind, he may pray to his guru or God and then begin his sadhana. In such practices it is desirable that the sadhaka regulates the rhythm of his breath for a few minutes by a few inhalations and exhalations through the left and right nostrils, but this is not a condition of the sadhana.

The next stage is *Aum* chanting. The chanting has to be done neither in a loud or shrill voice, nor in a very low tone.

The tone should be medium, slow and well modulated. The breath has first to be drawn in and at the time of exhaling the *Aum* has to be chanted. The chanting should be done from mooladhara to sahasrara, and has to be repeated thirteen times or eleven times. The sadhaka has to be conscious of the chanting and should feel the vibrations within when the sound rises from mooladhara to sahasrara.

In the third stage, the sadhaka has to practise the chakra anusandhana. The importance and the positions of the various centres have been explained before. The sadhaka has now to start with nasikagra and end up with mooladhara, and again go up there and end up with nasikagra. The practice is to locate the chakra or to relate the individual extrovert consciousness to the internal plane. Since these centres are not gross but subtle and imperceptible, the sadhaka has to make his imagination sharp and with the inward eye visualize them within. This round of ascension and descent has to be practised thrice.

In the fourth stage, with the help of ujjayi pranayama and having located the centres, the sadhaka has to try to feel that he passes or rotates his consciousness in a conspicuous manner through these centres. With ujjayi he raises, in ascending order, his consciousness from nasikagra to bindu, retains it there for some time and while exhaling rotates it from ajna to mooladhara through the spinal passage, where again it has to be retained at the adhara centre before beginning the second round. Throughout this practice, a conscious effort should be made to feel the sensations which are experienced.

It is possible that the sadhaka experiences heat or cooling sensations, but he is not to be mindful of it and let his concentration be disturbed. He has just to feel and watch the movement of his *chetana*, consciousness, and the sensations, if any, and continue with his practice. If no sensations are experienced, there is no reason to be disappointed, because in some cases the entire nervous system may not be attuned to this practice in the initial

stage or the necessary intensity of concentration may not be acquired in the early stage. If the practice is continued with firmness and resolve, there is no doubt that the aspirant will experience many sensations. This has also to be done three times, but in this practice the sadhaka has to feel first the sensations and rotate the consciousness slowly, but as the practice develops he has to attempt to rotate it rapidly so that the rotation makes a complete, unbroken and endless circle. The fifth stage consists of the chidakasha dharana. It comprises five stages.

- i) The sadhaka should close his eyes and try to visualize the darkness which he sees in front of his eyes in the forehead. He should continue merely to watch the darkness, but not try to interpret or analyze it in any manner.
- ii) Gradually in the darkness that is being visualized in the first stage, a variety of colours may be seen or the sadhaka may see a star, golden light, streaks of bright light, a blue flame or a mixture of colours. Here again the sadhaka has to continue to watch these various manifestations which are astral in character without trying to understand or interpret their meaning or analyzing their causes. His function is that of a mere witness.
- iii) In this stage the sadhaka has to make his meditation more intense and sharpen his imagination. Here he has to visualize that his consciousness is going deeper and deeper into the surrounding darkness. It is the flight of consciousness in what is described in Christian mysticism as 'the dark night of the soul'. The consciousness is to be allowed to investigate the surrounding darkness and to penetrate it. The higher the state of concentration, the subtler will be the plane of consciousness and soon the sadhaka will feel that his consciousness is moving deeper and deeper in unexplored channels of unending and impenetrable darkness. This practice forms the base of mental telepathy. Its perfection leads to the inflow of subtle psychic powers.

- iv) After the last preceding stage, the sadhaka has to try to investigate the darkness around him, inside his being. In other words, he consciously attempts to take an overall survey of the darkness above, below and around him. This is the practice of expanding the consciousness. Just as in a desert, a traveller who has missed the way scans the horizon and the surroundings in an effort to find the way, likewise the sadhaka's attempt is to finally penetrate into this darkness and find his way to illumination.
- v) This is the very last stage where the sadhaka has to establish himself in the infinite expanse of intelligence, the chidakasha, which he was trying to investigate. All other attempts have to be given up, but he should remain fully conscious that he is in the centre of the inner firmament he was hitherto trying to explore. In fact, this is the extension of the individual consciousness onto the plane of cosmic consciousness, which is within his very being. Only an objective form has to be given for the sake of practice. The sadhaka has to finally realize that in the final analysis, he is at the centre of the entire cosmos. The infinite is within, without and around him and there is no partition between the individual and the infinite consciousness, which are identical.

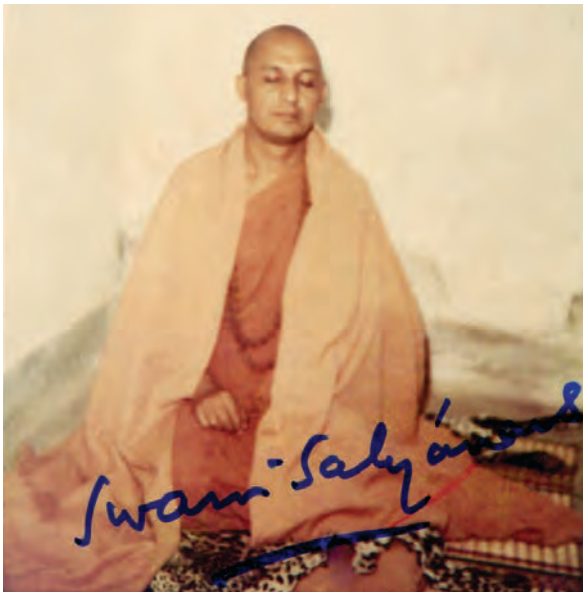
After this is done for some time the sadhaka has to finish his practice and for a time try to meditate on his ishta devata. He should visualize the image of his ishta in chidakasha and try to feel that he is doing his worship by offering flowers, waving lights, and so on.

The sadhana is to be concluded by repeating *Aum* chanting for thirteen times in the manner indicated before and thereafter with folded hands the sadhaka has to make a prayer for his own liberation and the greater good of mankind.

In the last stage before ending the sadhana, for a few seconds he has to try to keep the mind vacant, devoid of all thought processes. It is going into inner silence or dwelling within, before emerging on the conscious plane of the world.

Finally, for his own elevation, he has to make a healthy determination so that he may be enabled to cure the errors in his personality and remove the weaknesses which might prove a source of hindrance in the sadhana.

After the practice is concluded, the sadhaka is supposed to meditate for a time on the importance and significance of the practice and the ultimate aim of life to be achieved through the yoga sadhana. He has to attempt to realize that the individual consciousness is only an aspect of the pure consciousness and that the separateness which is experienced is due to the predominance of the tamoguna. Kundalini shakti represents the primordial energy or the Shakti of Paramshiva, the Goddess who, in her dynamic aspect, is responsible for the manifestation of the world and in the static aspect is reposed in the infinite being.



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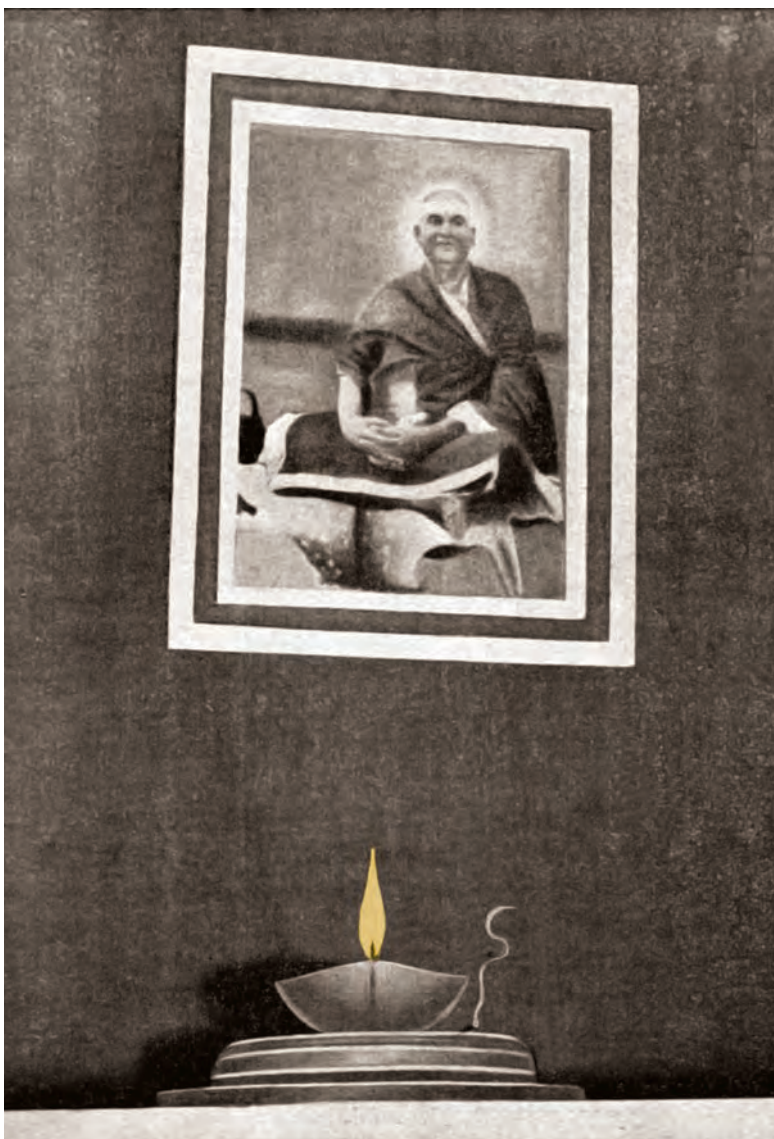
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The 'Yoga Weekly Get-Together Society', Muzaffarpur, Bihar, published this series of lectures delivered by Swami Satyananda to the students of the first International Yoga Teachers Training Course in Munger, 1967–1968. This souvenir volume, *Nada Yoga*, was released on the occasion of this Interstate Yoga Seminar in Muzaffarpur.



SYMBOLS OF LIFE AND LIGHT OF OUR MISSION
Swami Sivananda and the Akhanda Jyoti

Antar Mouna

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

To commemorate the First Patna Yoga Sammelan, *Antar Mouna* was published on 1st January 1968 by the Souvenir Committee of the event.

Japa Yoga

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Japa Yoga is the Bombay Yoga Seminar, Commemoration Volume, 1968, compiled of lectures by Swami Satyananda to the students of the twenty-nation International Yoga Teachers' Training Course. This nine-month course was held from the 1st July, 1967 to 31st March, 1968 at the Bihar School of Yoga, in Munger, Bihar, India. The lectures later formed the basis of many books, including *Four Chapters on Freedom*, *Asana Pranayama Mudra Bandha*, and *Early Teachings of Swami Satyananda*. The volume is dedicated to Swami Sivananda Saraswati of Rishikesh.

Ajapa Japa and Chidakasha Dharana

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

First published in 1973, *Ajapa Japa and Chidakasha Dharana* is presented before the reader by Swami Satyananda as precious practices of self-discovery.



SATYANANDA YOGA
BIHAR YOGA

On the occasion of the Golden Jubilee World Yoga Convention 2013, Munger, Bihar School of Yoga is pleased to present *The Golden Collection*, a compilation of the first publications of Sri Swami Satyananda Saraswati. Originally published in booklet format during the 1960s and 1970s, their modest nature made the wealth of the ancient science of yoga accessible to one and all. The depth in both knowledge and experience that is contained within these teachings is in itself unique and furthermore has paved the way for an entirely new understanding and approach towards the system of yoga. This collection of talks, lectures and letters is a truly historic contribution to the spiritual library of humankind.

Volume 3 of *The Golden Collection* is dedicated to the tantric practices of meditation expounded by Sri Swami Satyananda. With masterful simplicity of language, he explains the meaning, benefit and method of each practice. The practices of ajapa japa, antar mouna, mantra, yantra and chidakasha dharana are the invaluable fruit and offering of Sri Swami Satyananda to the inner growth of any sincere practitioner.



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